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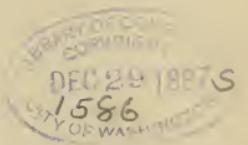


THE
RAILROAD
OF
LOVE

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

Franz von Schœnthan & Gustav
(From the German of Schœnthan and Kadelburg)

BY
AUGUSTIN DALY



ACTED FOR THE FIRST TIME AT DALY'S THEATRE, NEW YORK,
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1887

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TROW'S
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NEW YORK.

CAST OF THE ORIGINAL PRODUCTION AT DALY'S THEATRE.

GENERAL EVERETT, U.S.A.....	Mr. CHARLES FISHER.
LIEUTENANT HOWELL EVERETT, U.S.A., with an unblemished record and a Mislaid Heart.....	Mr. JOHN DREW.
PHENIX SCUTTLEBY, a polished relic of Wasted Energies,	Mr. JAMES LEWIS.
ADAM GRINNIDGE, Victim of the misapplied attentions of the Polished Relic.....	Mr. GEORGE CLARKE.
JUDGE VAN RYKER, not half a bad sort of parent, and an excellent judge—of Latour, '70.....	Mr. CHARLES LECLERCQ.
BENNY DEMARESQ, condemned by the Judge, and waiting sentence from the Judge's Daughter	Mr. OTIS SKINNER.
TRUFFLES, the Judge's Butler	Mr. E. P. WILKS.
CRUSTY, Mrs. Osprey's Footman	Mr. E. IRETON.
TOM, the General's Body-servant	Mr. JOHN WOOD.
Guests, Officers, Masqueraders, etc.	
VALENTINE OSPREY, otherwise "Cousin Val," a Goldfish for whom many are angling—and discoverer and explorer of the Mislaid Heart.....	Miss ADA REHAN.
VIVA VAN RIKER, another little Goldfish, who is hooked by the first Amateur Angler.....	Miss PHOEBE RUSSELL.
MRS. EUTYCIA LABURNAM, Goldfish of much larger experience—not to be caught on the fly	Mrs. G. H. GILBERT.
CHERRY, Cousin Val's Maid	Miss EVELINA COOKE.
ACT 1.—At the Van Ryker Mansion, during the progress of a Costume Ball	"STOPPING ON SIGNAL!"
ACT 2.—After the Ball. Morning!	"AN OPEN SWITCH!"
ACT 3.—Cousin Val's Morning-Room. The following afternoon.	"LIMITED EXPRESS!"
ACT 4.—Library at General Everett's. Same evening.	"WAY ACCOMMODATION!"

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Parlor and Conservatory at JUDGE VAN RYKER's, brilliantly lighted for a costume ball, which is in progress as the play opens. Large opening at back, leading into Conservatory. Window at L. C. Entrance at R. A tête-à-tête down L. Piano and small sofa down R.*

The curtain rises upon the last figure of a Lancers, in the front set of which are LIEUTENANT EVERETT and VIVA. Some of the guests are in military costume. Many are in fancy costume, mainly Elizabethan; others are in full evening dress. GENERAL EVERETT is seated at the L. with JUDGE VAN RYKER, and two officers. GRINNIDGE, in evening dress, with two ladies. The dance ends, and with a buzz of conversation the couples retire up c., and off R., and L.

Viva. [Coming forward with HOWELL.] What a pity it's over so soon!

Howell. No one regrets it more than I do. May I have the waltz after supper?

Viva. [Feigning surprise.] Why, Lieutenant Everett, what are you thinking of? My card is filled up—don't you know? [Shows it—as TRUFFLES, who has entered at close of the dance and has been handing a tray of bouillon among the guests, advances and offers a cup to HOWELL.]

Truffles. Bouillon, sir?

How. Thanks—not any. [VIVA also declines.] Couldn't you manage to give me one little extra tour for each dance?

Viva. We'll see about it. [Crosses to JUDGE, who rises and meets her.] Oh, papa, I'm having such a nice time.

Judge. I should think so—with such a partner.

How. Oh, I beg——

Judge. [Advances to HOWELL.] No, but really, lieutenant, you dance just as I used to when I was young; only, of course, with a more military air. [HOWELL goes up. JUDGE VAN RYKER turns to the GENERAL, who has been joined by two officers.] Ah, gentlemen, hope you are enjoying yourselves. [VIVA slips away unperceived, and steals up R. and looks into the conservatory furtively. The JUDGE continues,

going to the GENERAL.] General, come with me [*confidentially to him and the others*], I've got a private battery set up for you military heroes. Regular heavy guns ! "Lafitte," "Latour '70," and a Madeira as old as your grandfather ! Let's storm it, eh ? Come along ! [Slips an arm into that of each officer and takes them off, r. c.]

General. I'll join you later. [To HOWELL, who comes forward, r. c.] I say, my boy, aren't you rather too discriminating in your attentions ? You appear to be dancing with one young lady every time.

How. Why, sir, you always said one couldn't dance too often with a pretty girl. And she is pretty—isn't she ?

Gen. Stuff, sir ! What does a mere boy like you know about beauty ? A man can't distinguish a really pretty woman until he knows good wine from bad, and he has to be a general to understand that.

How. If that is the case, sir, I feel qualified to take command of a brigade at once.

Gen. [Good-humoredly.] Impudent puppy ! [Affectionately putting his arms about his son's neck.] Well, go on ; but don't forget our bargain. You are to come and tell me when you fall in love.

How. Certainly, governor ! But I hate to be running to you every minute.

Gen. Scamp ! But I mean when it is really serious.

How. Serious ! Oh, I won't trouble you for years. [TRUFFLES comes down with tray of refreshments.]

Truff. [To GENERAL.] Ice, sir !

Gen. Thanks, no. [Goes up with HOWELL. TRUFFLES goes to others.]

BENNY enters from L., sulkily.

Benny. I'm tired of this business. If I can pick out my modest civilian's hat and umbrella from among all these masquerade gimeracks and military accoutrements I'll vanish. [VIVA sees him, and runs down.]

Viva. Oh, Benny ! where have you been ? Have you just come ?

Ben. Just come ! I'm just going. [Crosses, L.] I've been here two hours watching you dance with the whole United States Army.

Viva. You are not angry at that ?

Ben. Oh no, I'm not at all angry. Only understand, I'm glad our army's no larger. I'm not in favor, for one, of increasing our land-forces.

Viva. You unpatriotic creature ! Don't you feel the glorious spirit of the scene ? [Crosses, L.] You—a painter ! These gorgeous dresses, these elegant uniforms, and the manly fellows who wear 'em !

Ben. I think a ball where an individual in a mere evening dress-suit has some chance of a dance much more inspiriting.

Viva. How unjust you are ! After my entreating papa to send you an invitation, too ; and after my begging him to keep a look-out for you all the evening.

Ben. [Relenting.] Did you ?

Viva. [Still pouting.] And who's been straining her eyes and craning her neck up there to try and find you ? I have !

Ben. [Overjoyed.] Have you really ?

Viva. And who's to dance the next waltz with you ? I am !

Ben. [Alarmed.] No !

Viva. What ? No ?

Ben. [Sulkily.] You know I can't waltz.

Viva. That's a fact. [Consults her card.] What can I do for you ? Let me see.

Ben. [Looks over card with her.] Why, your card is a regular military register. Nothing but lieutenants, and generals, and dukes, and marquises.

Viva. [Severely, shutting card.] Are you going to begin again ? It's plain enough you want to quarrel with me, so as to get out of dancing altogether.

Ben. No—I do want to dance, but I'd rather talk to you. I've got so much to say, and when I see all these gold-lace fellows taking up the precious time you might be giving to me—

Viva. Talk now ! I'm listening.

Ben. I can't, here, in this ball-room, with everybody popping in and out.

Viva. That's only an excuse. Yesterday, when I gave you a sitting for my portrait, you had an excellent opportunity ; we were alone for a whole quarter of an hour, and you talked of nothing but antiquities.

Ben. I was leading up to what I wanted to say. I intended to touch lightly on Phidias and the new-found Hermes of Praxiteles, and to pass on to—to—[loses the thread of his discourse]—to Phidias—Praxiteles—Hermes—

Viva. [Impatiently.] Well ?

Ben. [Confused.] I forgot what—that is, I lost the thread for a moment. [Wipes his brow.] Don't you find it very sultry ? I'm burning ! [Ardently taking her hand.] Burning !

HOWELL enters with a group from L.

Viva. [Bashfully—letting him retain her hand, but moving a step off.] Yes, it is rather warm. [Crosses, L.]

Ben. [Ardently.] You feel it too? Oh, Viva! [She turns her eyes on him.] Let me—let me—get you a glass of ice-water. [Darts off, R.]

Viva. Ice-water! And I thought a declaration was coming at last! I'll tease him for that. [HOWELL, who has been chatting with several ladies in the conservatory, comes forward.] Why, lieutenant, you seem to have forgotten me for fully five minutes.

Howell. My dear Miss Van Ryker, let me take your reproof as an undeserved distinction. [They go aside, L., talking, as JUDGE VAN RYKER, the officers and GENERAL enter, in an expansive mood. The judge seizes the general's arm and points to the young couple, and in an exhilarant tone:]

Judge. Ah, general, that son of yours! You may laugh at me, but I'm beginning to take a deep interest in that boy—I mean the lieutenant, excuse me.

General. [Amused.] Don't restrain yourself, I beg.

Judge. Now look at him and my daughter! It's a pretty picture, isn't it? [The two officers go up laughing.]

Gen. [Laughing.] A very pretty pair!

Judge. That's it! a pair! Both of 'em! [In a burst of confidence.] General, I've got a little private battery of my own upstairs—for us old blades. Let's storm it!

Gen. No soldier could refuse such a challenge as that. [They go up, laughing. At the door VAN RYKER turns, and once more calls the GENERAL'S attention to the group. Then he slaps the GENERAL on the back, and they disappear.]

How. [Who has been flirting with VIVA on the tête-à-tête.] I solemnly declare—

Viva. [Rising and retreating.] No, I won't believe a word you say.

How. [Following nonchalantly.] That's hard! What have I done to deserve it?

Viva. Nothing particular. It's only the general failing of the army—inconstancy! It's something in the buttons, I suppose.

How. But look at the facts in the present case. With a bevy of perfect beauties here this evening, I've deserted everyone for you!

Viva. The evening isn't half over yet, and the evening star has yet to appear.

How. [Interested.] Indeed ! Who is she ? Do tell me.

Viva. Oho ! How interested you are, all of a sudden. Now don't deny it ! Oh, I don't mind. I should only like to see you two together. You'd find your match at fencing. But I warn you—she not only parries, she hits every time.

How. You actually terrify me. Who is the amazon ?

Viva. My best friend—Val Osprey.

How. Val ?

Viva. Mrs. Valentine Osprey.

How. Mrs. ? [With emphasis.]

Viva. [Hastily]. She's a widow. [Reassuring.] But very young, very pretty, and VERY rich. Above all, witty enough to turn your martial head completely.

How. I hope she'll be merciful.

Viva. She never gives quarter to an obstinate foe.

How. Ah, then it will be war to the death.

BENNY enters with a glass of water.

Benny. [On seeing the lieutenant.] That same military fellow, again ! [VIVA perceives BENNY, but feigns not to, and coquets with HOWELL.]

Viva. When she makes her appearance, I shall be deserted and sit moping in a corner, I suppose.

Ben. [Advances behind them, and coldly.] The ice-water, Miss Van Ryker.

Viva. [Not turning.] Thank you—thank you. [Continues with HOWELL.] I shall have to comfort myself with dreams of the happy hours when the sun of your favor still warmed my existence.

How. Now you're chaffing !

Ben. [Louder.] I beg pardon—the ice-water.

How. [Not turning, and mistaking him for a waiter.] Get out. [To VIVA.] Oh, did you order it ? Hold on, Delmonico. [Turns and takes the glass.] Allow me, Miss Van Ryker. [To BENNY.] John, fetch me another, quick.

Viva. [Laughs.] Allow me. [Introducing.] Lieutenant Everett—Mr. Demaresq.

How. [Quickly, apologizing.] Oh, I beg pardon, I'm sure—thousand times sorry. Awkward mistake.

Ben. [Declining the proffered hand, stiffly.] Sir, I really don't know—

Viva. [Imperiously, going to him.] What don't you know ?

Ben. [Abashed.] I don't know.

Viva. [Meaningly.] If you wish to quarrel here, every-

thing is over between us forever. [Bows to HOWELL.] Lieutenant Everett! [Sweeps out without noticing BENNY, who gazes after her.]

How. I trust my fatal mistake, Mr. Demaresq, will be sufficiently atoned for by an apology.

Ben. Cer—certainly, Mr. Everett, and, under ordinary circumstances, that would be the end of the matter; but allow me to say, in a friendly spirit, that your attentions to Miss Van Ryker have been remarked.

How. But I can't allow you to say it; that is, unless you have some official right to warn me off.

Ben. I have, sir. I worship the very ground she walks upon.

How. I shan't interfere with your devotions to the ground, sir. [Laughs.]

Ben. I am not jesting, sir.

How. I'm sorry for that, because I don't wish to take you seriously.

Ben. [Bristling up.] If I tell you that I seek her hand—and that any other man—

How. Let any other man alone. [BENNY turns away.] It will be better. Do you ride?

Ben. Ride? Of course—sometimes—what has—

How. Good horse?

Ben. What has that got to do with Miss Van Ryker or you?

How. Everything. The animal, if he's the right sort, is as tame as a pet lamb—you could explode a battery under his nose, and he wouldn't stir. But let another nag come behind and try to outrun him: Pst! and he's off like the wind. There's a little bit of the horse-kind in all of us. Some of us are mules and some of us are asses—you've seen that kind—but we none of us like to be left in the race. For my part, I'm as patient a donkey as you ever saw; but if you will crack your whip behind me, and yell at me to clear the track, I'll be shot if I don't give you a brush for it.

Ben. That's an ingenious excuse for trying to take away another man's sweetheart.

How. I won't take his sweetheart—but I won't take his dust, either.

Ben. Well, if you are brash enough to run the race—so be it. But don't reckon on a walk-over. I don't know what my own chance is as yet.

How. I thought as much.

Ben. I mean, as far as her parent is concerned. He has

ideas of his own, and they run in another direction—but, as to the heart of the daughter, I have every reason to believe it's mine.

How. If that's so, I wouldn't talk about it.

Ben. On the contrary, I shall speak at once, and to the young lady.

How. You may.

Ben. I shall—with or without your permission. The next dance after supper is a cotillon. I shall dance it with her, and in the course of it I shall open my heart to her.

How. She'll enjoy that, no doubt.

Ben. I shall tell her—I won't tell you what I'll tell her. But we'll see which of us wins her—[Slaps his chest.]—the soul of an artist, or a dozen brass buttons.

How. [Sips from the glass in his hand.] Here's luck to you.

Ben. In ice-water? Thank you. I think you'll find it colder before the evening's over. [Exit after VIVA, L. U. E.

How. Queer fish! [Gives the glass to TRUFFLES, who is passing.] Am I the man to be daunted by the threat of an undeclared passion, of an undanced quadrille? Never! [Sits a moment in contemplation. March to supper played off stage.]

Truff. [Pauses in door-way, looking at the glass.] Ice-water! Our army is going to the devil when the officers take to ice-water. [Exit, L. U. E.

How. [Springing up.] My boy, you shall not dance that dance, if I have to turn off the gas. [As he is going up he meets SCUTTLEBY, who enters, L. U. E.] Why, hallo, Scuttleby, old boy—let's go and join the ladies.

Scuttleby. The ladies are all at supper, in various spots. [To TRUFFLES, who is repassing.] Truffles, open the window and give us a draught. We don't mind it, and it will keep everybody else out of the room. [Hands him gratuity.]

Truff. All right, sir. [Opens window and exit, L. U. E.

How. Why, what's up, Scuttleby?

Scut. As you see me at this moment, I'm the unhappiest of men.

How. You—you unhappy! [Laughs.] If I were not afraid of seeming frivolous, I should say that you make me smile.

Scut. That's my fate through life. Other men are pitied—I am laughed at. It serves me right. I never cultivated the art of looking glum. But how can a man of the world be glum—life's so jolly—clubs—horses—cards—suppers—theatres—balls—the people—men and women—especially the

women ! ah ! the thirty-button, five and three-quarter angels ! Oh ! and to think that I must give them all up ! [*Sighs, and throws himself on tête-à-tête.*]

How. Not so bad as that, I hope.

Scut. Fact. I'm standing face to face with nothing. Before me is oblivion. [*Sits.*]

How. I knew you were going it rather wildly. But that's nothing new—you've been doing that as long as I can remember. Why not pull up ?

Scut. I can't pull up. Cut off my champagne, and I die of thirst. I've been there once before—saved by a friend, Tom Dekkar; you know him. Put his hand in his pocket, squared everything, and set me on my legs again. It took a lot of money, though—bless him.

How. But I heard you squared with him afterward.

Scut. Oh, yes. Squared everything. Gave him my notes on demand. As long as Tom lived I was easy. Now he's gone, poor fellow, I am expecting to hear from his executors every day.

How. By Jove, that is bad. No way out ?

Scut. Only one. Cousin Val.

How. Cousin Val, eh ? Will he help you ?

Scut. It isn't a he, it's a she—Mrs. Valentine Osprey.

How. [*Concealing a surprise and a start.*] Humph ! Is Cousin Val so very wealthy ?

Scut. Immensely ! Osprey left her a fortune—humph ! What a fortune ! [*Sighs.*] Ah, well, it's no use getting too soft about it.

How. She's young, and pretty, too ?

Scut. Most desirable investment.

How. Why don't you marry her ?

Scut. That was the first thought to enter my head—unfortunately it was the last to enter hers. She declined peremptorily. [*With injured air.*] It was almost personal.

How. She probably loves someone else.

Scut. Oh, my boy, if she only would. But there's no such luck for me. Let her marry, and I'm a rich man.

How. How do you make that out ?

Scut. She gets the entire income while she remains a widow. If she marries, the principal comes to me—unless I marry first—and I settle a modest allowance upon her. That's Osprey's will.

How. What a rascally provision ! Poor girl !

Scut. Now you understand how my lovely cousin, by bestowing her hand, can make me the happiest of men.

How. Even if she bestows it on somebody else.

Scut. Oh how I have tried to bring it about. It would fill volumes. I've pictured to her the joys of domestic life ; but she appears to have had one dose, and don't want another. I even offered to double the allowance—all in vain. She laughs at me. I've introduced the handsomest, wittiest fellows ; they courted her in a way that threw me into ecstasies ; two of them were on the brink of proposing—but when I prepared them, with every precaution, for the facts about the will, what do you suppose they did ?

How. Beat a retreat.

Scut. Yes, sir, backed out, the mean scoundrels ! One was suddenly called to a sick aunt in Memphis. The other had the coolness to propose a division to me—he to take the lady and half the money, and I to be satisfied with the other half. [Crosses, L.] Gall, wasn't it ? I tell you, old man, nobody marries for love nowadays. Men are dying out ! Nothing left but a selfish lot of money-grubbers.

How. I'm afraid so.

Scut. But now I've got an idea, and I want your help.

How. Willingly—but I hope you don't wish *me* to—to—

Scut. No, no ! No designs on your happiness. I know you can't afford to marry a girl with nothing. You've got to look out for a good match. No, there's another man—the right one this time, I believe. [Energetically.] When I went to the depot last week to meet Cousin Val, I found *him* on the same train. I recognized him at once, though I had not seen him for years. Rich—perfectly saturated with securities—mean as the devil—but a good heart. I wouldn't let him go to a hotel, but took him home with me. I feed him on her photographs, and read him to sleep with Swinburne.

How. And the result ?

Scut. So far, very good—only he's so infernally calm. I take him to see her every evening. He seems to be willing, but the deuce is with her. She has an uncomfortable way of smiling at everything he says. Still, that's not a very bad sign, is it ? [Anxious.]

How. Well—that depends.

Scut. It's given me a great deal of anxiety. [Looks off.] Oh, lord—there he is now, and with another girl on his arm ! [He goes up as GRINNIDGE comes on, L., with a lady and a gentleman, in animated conversation. SCUTTLEBY comes between GRINNIDGE and the lady, and takes the former's arm.] Ah, Adam, old boy ! [To others.] Excuse me. [The lady and gentleman go off.] Are you out of your senses, old fellow ?

Grinnidge. Why?

Scut. Why? Suppose Mrs. Osprey should pop in and find you with another girl. [Shakes his head.] Ah! ah!

Grin. Is she here yet? [Eagerly.]

Scut. She is expected every minute. [To HOWELL.] See how impatient he is. He can hardly wait. [Digs GRINNIDGE in side.]

Grin. [Modestly.] Oh, pshaw!

Scut. Ah, you rascal! [Aside to HOWELL.] What do you think of him?

How. [Aside to SCUTTLEBY.] He looks marriageable.

Scut. [Same.] Doesn't he? [Aloud to GRINNIDGE.] I want to make you acquainted with my friend, Lieutenant Everett—Lieutenant, Mr. Adam Grinnidge. The lieutenant is as much at home here as he is on the plains, and if you want a point or two about life in town—

Grin. [Shakes hands with HOWELL.] I appreciate the advantages of the acquaintance.

How. The pleasure is mine. I understand you are fond of poetry. [SCUTTLEBY kicks him.]

Grin. Oh! that's Scuttleby's doings. He is really too kind to me. I don't know how I deserve it.

Scut. Why, the very first thing I heard of you from Cousin Val raised you in my estimation. [To HOWELL.] Just fancy! Val dropped her bag off the platform between the tracks just as the train was starting—and he jumped down and got it for her at the risk of his life. Think of it—risked his life to oblige a lady.

Grin. [Remonstrating.] The fact is, I thought it was my bag.

Scut. [Vexed.] For goodness sake, Grinnidge, don't say that where she can hear you. You've said it before, and I told you to let well enough alone. She's getting deeply interested in you.

Grin. Indeed! I'm glad of that. I'm particularly anxious to get in her good graces. I think she is—

Scut. [Quickly interrupting him.] An angel. Of course she is. Have you sent her a bouquet? [Takes his handkerchief, and mechanically but affectionately brushes GRINNIDGE's coat.]

Grin. No. Ought I to do that?

Scut. [Impatiently.] Ought you to do that? Adam, you are too slow a coach for the nineteenth century. Man alive! it's railroad time with the women nowadays. The fast express catches the fair passenger. If you are loaded

with millions, you may court on way-freight time, or a particularly fascinating fellow may jog along on accommodation schedule. But the dare-devil in love will flash across the switches, through the tunnels, and around the curves with a strong heart and no flinching. That's the sort that subjugates both time and woman.

Grin. [Feebly.] I'll go out and get a bouquet at once.

Scut. [Detains him.] Luckily I thought of it, and sent one already with your card in it. It's all right. [Takes a rose from his coat.] Here's a rose from it for your button-hole.

Grin. [Takes rose.] What a fellow you are!

How. Allow me to assist. [Adjusts the rose.]

Grin. Gentlemen, you are both too good. [SCUTTLEBY produces a long bottle of Cologne and sprinkles him. VIVA looks in at l. c., and runs to HOWELL.]

Viva. [Half-whisper.] Mr. Everett!

How. Miss Van Ryker!

Viva. Mrs. Osprey is here. [Runs back and off.]

Scut. Cousin Val come! [To GRINNIDGE.] Hurry up! Be the first to meet her! [Urges GRINNIDGE up c., then turns back quickly to HOWELL. GRINNIDGE goes up, and after leaving SCUTTLEBY meets two gentlemen, and they go off, r., together. SCUTTLEBY speaks hastily as he comes back to HOWELL.] Now, old chap, for the act of friendship I want you to perform for me. You are going to lead the german after supper. Give Grinnidge a fair chance with Val. See that he gets an opportunity to have a long talk with her. I wish to gracious we could have one of those old-fashioned forfeit games where kissing comes in. That used to do the business. Weddings and forfeits died out together. You'll help me?

How. Make your mind easy.

Scut. [As VALENTINE is heard laughing outside.] Look sharp! here she is.

How. [Looking up.] By Jove! [SCUTTLEBY represses him as VALENTINE OSPREY enters with VIVA, and through a little crowd of admirers, among them the GENERAL and JUDGE VAN RYKER, who remain above, with some ladies. VALENTINE comes down—followed by VIVA, and SCUTTLEBY advances to her.]

Scut. You're late. You're three hours behind almanac-time. Venus was to rise at eight.

Valentine. That's very florid, but you can't scold half as prettily as Viva.

Viva. Now you are here, it's all right. But you nearly

spoiled my whole evening. There are ever so many men here I want to see fall dead in love with you.

Val. You mean you want them to dance with me.

Viva. Same thing. Allow me to present our best waltzer, Lieutenant Everett.

Val. [Looks at him, as if she recognized him.] Indeed.

How. I assure you—— [Somewhat embarrassed.]

Viva. I've told him ever so much about you. I won't tell you anything about him. You must find him out for yourself. Only—believe just a fraction of the pretty things he says.

Val. [Who has been regarding HOWELL with unsuppressed and smiling interest, now laughs.] How cruel!

How. [To VIVA.] I seem to make a very lively impression. [Bites his mustache.]

Scut. [Who has been looking off everywhere for GRINNIDGE.] I say, Val, have you seen Grinnidge?

Val. No. Is he here?

Scut. Why, certainly. He's been standing on his head with impatience. Just now he was boring me with questions as to when you were coming. [To JUDGE VAN RYKER, who comes forward to VIVA.] Judge, where did Grinnidge go?

Judge. Who? Grinnidge? Oh! he's smoking a cigarette upstairs. [HOWELL and VIVA talk aside.]

Scut. [Furious.] Smoking a cigarette! [Hurrying up.] I'll make him swallow it. [Exit, R.]

Val. [To JUDGE.] You ought to have suppressed that fact. *Judge.* Why?

Val. It's quite a funny story. I'll tell you sometime. I spend my lonesome afternoons laughing over it. [Crosses, R.]

Judge. I must hear it, you know. [Sees HOWELL, and goes to him.] But, bless my soul, let me introduce an excellent young friend of mine; I'm proud of him—Lieutenant Howell Everett. [HOWELL looks vexed, and VALENTINE looks at him and laughs.] An honor to the service!

Viva. But, papa——

Judge. [Continues.] The pride of——

Val. [Interrupting.] Battery "B."

Judge. [Continuing.] The pet of the ladies.

How. My dear sir——

Val. [Sobering.] I've had the pleasure already.

Judge. Oh! you have. Then it's all right. [Goes up.]

How. [Aside.] I wonder why she smiles all over whenever she looks at me. I'm not Grinnidge.

Viva. [Aside to VALENTINE] Why do you look at him and laugh?

Val. I'll tell you by and by. Leave us together for a few moments.

Viva. Oh, you know one another. Well, of all the sly men—and he never breathed it. [Takes JUDGE's arm.] Come, papa. [They go up and join group at back; presently she is joined by BENNY, and the party goes off together.]

How. [Producing an order of dancing.] Permit me to present you with a card of the dances. [She takes it.] I shall presently have the painful duty of introducing some partners.

Val. [Surprised.] Painful? Duty?

How. Unfortunately, since I should esteem myself supremely happy if you would, to save further trouble, write my name across your card.

Val. Isn't that a little unreasonable?

How. I feel it so myself, but a glance at the mirror would show you how natural my request really is.

Val. Do you think so? [Looks at him smilingly, and then gives way to an immoderate burst of laughter.]

How. [Piqued.] Mrs. Osprey, you doubtless know how well a laugh becomes you, but couldn't you do a graceful act and permit me to join in the merriment? Only be kind enough to let me know where the joke is.

Val. Oh, yes, I'll be kind enough. Look at me attentively.

How. You know very well I've been studying your face for the last ten minutes.

Val. And it recalls nothing to you?

How. The fact is— [Pause.]

Val. The fact is, we do not meet for the first time. [Sits at piano, R.]

How. [Eagerly.] Indeed. [Beside her.]

Val. Turn back a few leaves of your memory. Where did I see you before? Come now—guess. [Plays gently.]

How. Where? [Trying to think, then venturing.] At a ball?

Val. You are nowhere near it. As the children say in their game—you're "cold." [Continues to play.]

How. [Suddenly.] At the opera? [She laughs.] At the theatre?

Val. Very cold—freezing. Go on. Guess!

How. Travelling?

Val. [Stops playing.] Warmer.

How. Ah, then it was travelling. Let's see. I was in Oregon in '84—Oregon? [She laughs and resumes playing.] Not Oregon—eh? [Sudden guess.] Down South—Mobile?

Val. Cold. [*Plays softly another air, something Tyrolean.*]

How. There! [*Listening to music.*] Oh, I knew it was not in this country. It was abroad.

Val. Very warm.

How. I was abroad in '85. Italy? No! The Tyrol? [*She stops.*] It was in the Tyrol.

Val. Hot.

How. Hot—so am I. But where—

Val. Have you forgotten the excursion-train to Weisenbach?

How. What? Not— [*At a sudden recollection he hides his face in his hands in comic fright.*] Oh, never!

Val. Yes, sir.

How. But, come now—as I remember, there were only two ladies in the coach.

Val. Are you sure?

How. There was a bundle in the corner. Somebody or something wrapped up in rugs and shawls.

Val. I was the bundle.

How. [*Horrified.*] You? Impossible.

Val. Yes.

How. Oh, well, in that disguise you can't blame me for not recognizing—

Val. Oh, no, I don't complain of that. I had caught a frightful cold on the Grundl Lake. When I got into the car, I found two young ladies—the pink of propriety and primness—they looked as if butter wouldn't melt in their mouths. At the second station the door flies open, and a gentleman darts in. A moment's glance showed me a fellow-countryman. A second showed me a soldier. I watched. His first glance took us all in. He disdained the bundle, but his eagle-eye fell upon the two poor little fräuleins, and seemed to say— Tell me, what do men say to themselves when they think they are going to be irresistible?

How. [*Crestfallen.*] I don't know, I'm sure.

Val. Oh, well, perhaps they say nothing. At all events, I said to myself: "My young friend, you will lose your time, those two young ladies are above flirtation."

How. [*With a conceited air.*] Indeed.

Val. Oh, yes, I admit it—I was basely deceived. My young countryman did not lose his time. He began the attack. At first the Tyrolean doves were indignant at the American eaglet. He didn't mind that. He went on. How he went on—and about *what*, I didn't know; but in less than ten minutes he had the two in a perfect ecstasy of fun, and by

the time we reached Weisenbach they were all three talking at once. When he got out there was a most effusive leave-taking, and the last I saw of him, he was standing on the platform holding two roses in one hand and blowing kisses with the other, while two handkerchiefs from the coach-window were waving him tender adieux. His success was so pronounced that I did as they do in a theatre—I clapped my hands and cried, “Bravo !”

How. [Bows, smiling.] Glad that our efforts met with your approbation—

Val. Well, the train started—and the two girls sighed, squeezed each other’s hands, rolled their eyes upward, and then settled back to be pinks of propriety and primness as before. From that day to this I have been plagued with curiosity to know how he did it? What witty, original, ingenious things could he have said to break down their reserve, upset their decorum, and make those two young Tyrolean lambs as wild and as frisky as himself.

How. [Flattered.] Oh—

Val. And now I meet him face to face—of course, the first thing I hear is that he’s the pride of the service and the pet of the ladies. I was prepared to be dazzled, astonished, delighted—and then to be disappointed this way. Oh! [Mock resentment.]

How. [Seriously.] What way?

Val. Instead of brilliant originality—common-places, dancing-school compliments. [He draws himself up.] Don’t be angry. It’s your own fault. You led me to anticipate too much. After what I had seen on the railroad to Weisenbach, I expected champagne—and you treat me to lemonade. It’s very nice—but I have been so surfeited with lemonade.

How. [Who has recovered himself and begins to look wicked.] You are a severe judge, my dear Mrs. Osprey—but I bow before your sentence. Only let me speak a last word in my defence.

Val. Pray, do.

How. I can understand that the beginning of my conversation was not calculated to impress you very strongly. But all beginnings are tedious, you must remember. The most thrilling stories commence with that hackneyed, “Once upon a time ;” yet if we read on, the interest deepens. But you shut the book with a petulant “No good,” and toss it aside before you’ve got to the end of the first chapter.

Val. Because I found it the old story, and the hero—

How. Have mercy on the poor hero. Remember his em-

barrassment in the first scene. He meets a lady who doubly disconcerts him—first by her beauty, and then by her laughter, for which he can assign no cause. [Keenly.] You should have given him time to discern the presence of so much wit behind the ridicule.

Val. I admit that. It was not very easy.

How. You see ; the poor hero excites your sympathy already. If you would accompany him a few chapters further on—I don't know the plot myself yet—but the story is likely to take us off the beaten paths, that I can promise you, through forests dark—perhaps by crooked ways—by precipice and dizzy height, and danger. In fact, just where a pretty woman's caprice might lead any man, even the wisest.

Val. Indeed. That's quite to my taste. It might tempt me to read further.

How. To the end ?

Val. That depends. If the plot is fascinating enough.

How. It shall be. Give me your attention closely. The real interest begins at the moment the heroine appears. [He says this with meaning. VALENTINE drops her eyes.] She is no fashionable doll, no boarding-school beauty, but a WOMAN, in whose eyes the hero seeks his fate with ardent eagerness. He finds it—he reads there that to win her he must make a name the world shall honor, and when he does, when he sinks at her feet to claim the reward—

Val. [Interrupts him.] Oh, gently—gently ! You are disclosing the end. Then what becomes of the surprise ?

How. Oh, you'll have the surprise. Oh, dear, yes !

Val. Who knows whether the heroine will care to send such a terrible champion roaming through the world ?

How. Oh, she will, she will. My heroine will.

Val. Indeed. Do you know there are some women who, out of mere caprice, might feel inclined to be angry at a hero who, quite unasked, insists upon making them his Dulcineas.

How. [Pretending surprise.] Unasked ? Of course ! But I have asked.

Val. [Freezingly.] I am not aware of the fact.

How. [Pretending gravity.] You ! Certainly not, my dear madam. But the other one has—my heroine.

Val. [Forgetting herself.] Your heroine—why, I thought — [Checks herself.]

How. Exactly. You thought. That's the surprise. The readers of romance always think they know—when it turns out it's somebody else. But go on—read right on to the end, you'll find the plot thicken.

Val. [Aside.] The wretch !

How. I believe I can promise you a number of startling incidents. You not only made a mistake in the heroine, but I'll wager you've been mistaken in the hero, too. He doesn't always offer lemonade. [She looks at him. He adds, sweetly:] When he meets a connoisseur he serves champagne. [Bows.]

Val. [After a short pause, extends her hand and smiles.] I am totally defeated.

How. [Kisses her hand.] Another victory like this and I am lost.

VIVA runs in, L.U.E.

Viva. [Going to HOWELL.] Supper's over and everybody wants to dance, lieutenant. [All the ladies and gentlemen enter from back.] The ladies will mutiny.

How. Will you excuse me, my dear Mrs. Osprey? [Bows and goes up giving a signal, which is responded to by the band giving the preliminary flourish for a cotillon.]

Val. [To VIVA, aside.] Do you know that your lieutenant is a military monster? [Goes up and meets GENERAL and JUDGE.]

Viva. [Ironically.] Indeed. [Goes aside and meets HOWELL.]

How. [Taking both her hands, and aside.] Do you know that your friend is a perfect angel?

Viva. [Ironically.] Indeed. [BENNY advances brusquely between HOWELL and VIVA.]

Ben. I beg to remind you, lieutenant, that this is my quadrille.

How. No. Yours was a waltz.

Ben. No, sir; I can't waltz. [Slips VIVA's arm into his and takes his place at L., in the cotillon which is forming.]

How. Can't you? Then you won't have this dance. [Beckons to TRUFFLES, who has come on to close the window, and points off toward where the band is playing. TRUFFLES nods and exits.]

Scuttleby. [Who has joined VALENTINE above with GRINNIDGE, and now comes forward with both.] Yes, he found me at last, coz.; he's been running all over to find me and he finally got me. He wants the honor of your hand for this dance.

Val. With pleasure. [Takes GRINNIDGE'S arm, and as they look for a place SCUTTLEBY makes one for them at R. by seizing a couple and hurrying them up to a distant position, beckoning to GRINNIDGE to take the vacant place, which he

does ; coming back himself with a partner and taking the rear corner in the dance.]

Ben. [To VIVA.] At last I have you all to myself for fifteen minutes.

How. Don't be too sure. [The band begins a waltz-movement. BENNY commences to bow as in a cotillon. All couples have a moment's pause of surprise. Then a general laugh—and all begin to waltz.]

Ben. What's this?

Viva. A waltz. [HOWELL bows to her.]

Ben. But I can't waltz.

How. So sorry ! [He and VIVA begin to waltz, leaving BENNY in despair and knocked from side to side by the dancers. As they waltz off the music changes, and a Pavane is danced, at the end of which

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*The same. A day or two after the ball. Morning. VIVA is seen, at rise of curtain, playing the piano; an extremely lively air. After a while she breaks off suddenly, jumps up, and runs to the window at L., looks out, comes away with an "O pshaw!" and returns to piano, and sits pouting.*

Viva. I thought it was our bell. I'm sure he'll come today. He must want to make up after leaving me in a huff the night of the ball. And it wasn't my fault. I didn't change the music. There's some one trying to ring, I'm sure. [Darts toward the window again, and, just as she is about to look out, she is checked by the voice of her father, who enters at back.]

Judge. [Entering, R. U. E., and detecting VIVA running.] Where are you running, rogue ? Ah, to the window. I understand. [Slyly.] Impatient, eh ?

Viva. [Pretending.] Impatient about what ? [He shakes his finger at her.] You are very much mistaken, papa.

Judge. Am I ? I can tell you whom you are watching for this minute.

Viva. But I assure you—

Judge. [Interrupting, but kindly.] Never mind assuring me. Come here and let's have a sensible talk. [She ap-

proaches, and he draws her down beside him on the sofa.]
Why, how red you've got, all of a sudden. You guess what I'm going to say, you rogue.

Viva. Well, perhaps I do—a little. [Turns away.]

Judge. And what have you to say in reply?

Viva. Has he spoken to you already? [Facing him.]

Judge. No-o-o! but one can't help seeing how the cat jumps, eh?

Viva. Well, I suppose I've noticed something, too.

Judge. [Overjoyed.] And I suppose you've arranged everything between you?

Viva. I've arranged everything, and I shouldn't wonder if he had, but, papa, we haven't come to words yet.

Judge. And when you do, I suppose you won't quarrel.
[She turns away her head.] Ah, you little puss, kiss me.
[Rising.] But why doesn't he speak?

Viva. I don't know, papa. I can't begin it, of course, and he keeps putting it off and putting it off. I really believe he's afraid.

Judge. Afraid! What's he afraid of?

Viva. Me.

Judge. You?

Viva. Yes. Some men are so timid before a little woman, and yet they laugh at us for being frightened at a bit of a mouse. Papa—as I am so willing, and as you are so willing—shall I help him a bit?

Judge. Help him! To propose! What are you thinking of? It would be all over the camp in no time.

Viva. I don't see how it could get all over the camp. He hates the army.

Judge. Hates it? Is he going to resign?

Viva. Whom are you thinking of?

Judge. Whom are you speaking of?

Viva. Why, Benny Demaresq, of course.

Judge. [Hotly.] Has that young animal dared?

Viva. [Faltering.] Why, papa, you said you had noticed it—

Judge. Nonsense! Come, none of that.

Viva. Pray, explain, papa—none of what?

Judge. You flirted with Lieutenant Everett all night at the ball, and you cut that paint-mixer at every turn. That's what I noticed. What was I to think?

Viva. [Contritely.] You are right, papa. It was very wicked, and I'm very sorry. But I did it all to make him speak.

Judge. See here, I won't have any mistake about this. I'll speak to this young man myself.

Truffles. [Enters, announcing.] Mr. Demaresq!

Judge. He's just in time. [To TRUFFLES.] Show him in. [TRUFFLES exits. VIVA makes an appealing gesture to her father, who waves her off.] No, no. [TRUFFLES shows in DEMARESQ, and then exits.] I'm much obliged to you for coming just as you happen to be wanted.

Ben. I'm glad, sir, to be here, and if you are glad, I'm very glad, sir, I'm sure. [Looks at VIVA, who turns away in despair.]

Judge. We've made a pretty discovery here, sir. Under pretence of painting my daughter's portrait, you have been making love to her behind my back.

Ben. [Amazed, looks from JUDGE to VIVA, who starts.] M-making love, sir?

Viva. Papa!

Judge. [Severely.] Don't deny it! My daughter, sir, has confessed it all. Your arts have beguiled her, until she loves you.

Ben. [Overjoyed.] Say that again, sir.

Judge. No threats to me, young man. I repeat my words. She loves you—and has had the impudence to admit it.

Ben. [Goes to her.] Is it possible! [Embraces her.] My dearest girl.

Judge. [Stupefied.] What are you doing there, both of you?

Ben. Mr. Van Ryker, you have done more for me than I could do for myself. I dared to hope, but not to speak. How can I thank you? [Extends his hand.]

Judge. And you have the baseness to take advantage of a father's indignation?

Ben. A man in my place is thankful for anything. If you knew how I love her, Mr. Van Ryker—papa.

Judge. Silence. My daughter is engaged to Lieutenant Everett. [The young people start in astonishment, looking at him.]

Viva. Papa—that's a fib.

Judge. I have engaged her—and Lieutenant Everett's father has engaged him. He's coming here to-day to settle the preliminaries. The first preliminary to be settled is you—and I'll attend to you at once. Oblige me. [Hands him his hat, and is urging him up c. and off l.—when MRS. OSPREY enters.]

Ben. But, judge, listen to me.

Viva. Papa !

Val. [As she enters.] A scene ! [Stops.]

Viva. [Running to her.] Oh, won't you speak to papa ?

Judge. Valentine, you are my daughter's friend. Speak a sensible word to a foolish girl.

Val. Then you mustn't scold her. You see she is perfectly miserable already.

Judge. [Goes to VIVA, and pets her.] I won't make her miserable. And I won't allow her to make herself miserable. [To VIVA.] I don't ask you to do anything violent. Think it over. Take your friend's advice. [To VALENTINE.] You'll talk to her, won't you ?

Val. Make your mind easy. I know just how to manage these matters.

Judge. Very good. [To BENNY.] Then this gentleman need not trouble himself any further.

Ben. Oh, I don't. [Good-naturedly.]

Judge. What do you mean by that, sir ?

Truff. [Announcing.] General Everett.

Judge. Show him into the library. [TRUFFLES excits.] [To VIVA.] You see, here's his father. I can't back out now. You'll oblige me very much if you'll drop this sentimental nonsense and be practical. [Aside, after looking at BENNY.] The fellow doesn't stir. [Aloud to BENNY.] Are you coming ?

Ben. Thank you, I prefer to stay.

Judge. [To VALENTINE, forcibly.] Don't leave this room under any circumstances.

Val. I won't.

Judge. Thank you. [Aside, going.] Two's company, three's none. [Exit, L. As soon as he goes out, VALENTINE looks from one to the other ; VIVA, L., BENNY, R.]

Val. Now we are all together, and no one to interfere, tell me all about it. What's the matter ?

Ben. Nothing at all. We only love each other. That's all.

Viva. Yes, that's all. And we will never——

Val. Of course, of course. And that's all ?

Ben. No. There is a complication growing out of that Lieutenant Everett.

Viva. Yes. He wants to marry me.

Val. Indeed.

Viva. [Fiercely.] But I'll die first.

Ben. [Crosses to VIVA.] Not while I have life left. [Clasps her in his arms.] Oh, Viva ! Viva !

Viva. [Retreating.] Please don't. She's looking.

Ben. [Turning her to c.] My darling! my angel!

Val. Gently, gently, for gracious sake. I've no doubt this is very delightful to you—but it's like seeing other people eat.

Viva. [Going to her.] You know what love is.

Val. Yes. But I've had my dinner. [Crosses.]

Ben. I remember; you're a widow. But can you see a big, awkward fellow beside himself with joy and not feel moved?

Val. I'll help you all I can. [Laughs.] I have it—I'll speak to the lieutenant.

Viva. You dear, kind—

Ben. How can I thank you? [With ferocious fervor.] I can't believe it, it's so sudden. [To VALENTINE, turning VIVA to c.] Oh, if you were not here at this moment.

Val. I believe you. But, unfortunately, I have to be here. I have pledged my word not to leave this room.

Viva. [Despondent.] Oh, dear!

Val. Oh, you little goose.

Viva. [Suddenly.] Oh, I see—I understand. You are an angel. [Kisses her rapturously, and runs off R. U. E.]

Ben. [Alarmed, calls.] Viva! Viva! Where's she gone?

Val. To the next room.

Ben. Won't she come back?

Val. I don't know. I can't leave this room.

Ben. [After a pause, suddenly.] I see—I understand! You can't, but we can. Bless you. [Runs off after VIVA, R. U. E.]

Val. They think that's wonderful. It's the A B C of lovers' strategy. How many good things I can do for other people. I never have a chance to practise for myself.

Truffles. [Enters.] Mr. Grinnidge has just called to see the judge, ma'am, and the judge is engaged with another visitor—may I show Mr. Grinnidge in here?

Val. Certainly. [TRUFFLES exit.] Poor Cousin Scuttleby thinks he has found me a lover. I wish he could hear the love-making.

GRINNIDGE enters, L. U. E.

Grinnidge. Mrs. Osprey! What an unexpected pleasure!

Val. Quite an unexpected—meeting.

Grin. Judge Van Ryker is engaged, it seems. May I seize the opportunity to ask you whether you won't reconsider your refusal of the proposition I made you lately?

Val. The refusal is final; I have paid Cousin Scuttleby's debts too often. Please address yourself directly to him.

Grin. But he hasn't a dollar ; you know that as well as anybody. I came on to collect those notes of his—[Takes out a pocket-book from left breast-pocket.]—but he's been showing me so much attention that I haven't the heart to mention them. [Fingers three promissory notes.] Then he's been throwing out the most mysterious hints about some prospective good fortune in store for me ; I can't imagine what he's driving at —can you ?

Val. You may possibly learn, by and by. It concerns us both. [Laughs.]

Grin. [Pleased.] No ! Well, you understand, when a fellow is so friendly you can't dun him ; then all at once I was struck by an idea—you seemed to take a great interest in him—I felt sure you had a kind heart, and that perhaps I had only to propose the matter and you'd kindly take up the obligations. [Shows notes.]

Val. Oh, no. [Gives him her hand.] I thank you for your flattering confidence—but the amount is too large.

SCUTTLEBY enters at c. l., and stops on seeing them.

Grin. We won't call this the end of it. [Kissing her hand.] I'll hope for a change of sentiment. [Closes pocket-book.]

Scuttleby. [Overjoyed—rubbing his hands.] By Jove ! [Turns, and is about to steal off when they perceive him.]

Val. Oh, is that you ?

Scut. [Turns, embarrassed.] Yes; how de do ? [Aside, coming down c.] How awkward of me to spoil such a tête-à-tête.

Val. Now, what's that long face for ?

Scut. I ! Long face ! Oh, no. [Aside to GRINNIDGE.] Don't forget where you left off. I'm going right away again. [To VALENTINE.] I just remember I've got an appointment. Seeing you reminded me. I'll drop in later. [Going up.]

Val. Phenix. [Beckons him to her.]

Scut. [Comes down, c.] What is it ? [Confidentially.]

Val. I've been having a very interesting conversation with your friend Grinnidge.

Scut. [Delighted.] Really ! Did he come right out ?

Val. He did. Right out !

Scut. [Rapturously.] Christopher Columbus ! Are you sure of him ?

Val. I believe I understand him pretty thoroughly.

Scut. Do you? [Delighted.] Did I exaggerate?

Val. On the contrary, you don't know half about him yourself.

Scut. No. [Glances at GRINNIDGE.] And yet, when you look at him, there don't seem to be much to him. But he's got it here. [Taps his heart. GRINNIDGE is replacing the pocket-book in his left breast coat pocket.]

Val. Yes. That's just where he has got it.

Scut. Ah, let a woman alone for finding out. Well, I'll play innocent—and whatever comes out, I'll pretend to be astonished. [Winks at her.]

Val. Oh, you won't need to pretend. [To GRINNIDGE, going L.] Good morning, Mr. Grinnidge. Shall we see you this evening?

Scut. Certainly, certainly. [Goes to GRINNIDGE, and nudges him.]

Val. Pray, don't forget. [Exit, laughing, r. u. e.]

Scut. We won't forget. [Turns and grasps GRINNIDGE'S hand.] My boy, I congratulate you. Isn't that a woman! Madding! intoxicating!

Grin. She is quite jolly.

Scut. Quite jolly! Bah! wait till she fully bewitches you. And she will! Ah, you lucky dog! [Slips his arm into GRINNIDGE'S.] Tell me what you said to her.

Grin. I scarcely like to speak about such a delicate subject.

Scut. You're right. Grinny, old boy, I honor you—I honor your delicacy, I do. But only one question—did she, in the course of the conversation, allude to a clause in the will?

Grin. [Surprised.] Will! No.

Scut. [Aside.] She never does. I have to do it every time. I'll prepare him carefully. He seems in the proper disposition.

Grin. [Aside.] It's no use keeping him in the dark any longer. I may as well talk to him about the notes.

Scut. [To GRINNIDGE, with a burst of heartiness.] My dear Grinnidge, we knew each other as boys, and now we meet as men. I can say, without flinching, that you are one of the few fellows who still cherish the ideals of the true, the beautiful, and the good.

Grin. [Suspiciously.] I don't quite catch—

Scut. I mean, I believe you value the love of a beautiful woman above the whole universe.

Grin. [Slyly.] Well, I confess I am soft that way.

Scut. And you are right. What is mere money compared to it?

Grin. Well, we shouldn't undervalue *that*, either.

Scut. You mustn't say that, Adam, it isn't worthy of you. If a woman like my cousin, for instance, consented to make a man happy with her hand, wouldn't you think it despicable to ask, on the way to the altar, the amount of her fortune?

Grin. I would—that ought to be considered before.

Scut. Don't—don't be so cool, Grinnidge. It's an important moment in your life. Answer me candidly, do you like Mrs. Osprey?

Grin. [Frankly.] I like her very much.

Scut. Very well. Now, if I tell you that she is poor—peniless, would you like her the less for that?

Grin. [Surprised.] I! Certainly not.

Scut. [Touched, offers his hand.] Thank you, that answer does me good; and believe me, old fellow, in the years to come, on the day of your silver wedding, you'll recall this hour and bless me. You'll say: "He was right. Money goes, love remains. I did well to marry that girl."

Grin. Marry her? I! [Amazed.]

Scut. [Digs him in the ribs.] You lucky rascal!

Grin. You're joking. What would my wife say?

Scut. [His jaw falls—and he is compelled by sudden weakness to sink into a chair, c.—gazing at GRINNIDGE.] Your wife! You don't mean to say you're married?

Grin. Why, didn't you know?

Scut. [Indignantly.] Know! How the deuce should I know? You never mentioned it.

Grin. You never asked about it. [Takes an envelope from his pocket and extracts a letter and a carte de visite.] Here's a letter from my wife. I mentioned meeting you, and she sends her regards. Here's her photograph, with our Tommy on her lap.

Scut. Your Tommy on her lap!

Grin. [Frankly.] Perhaps I owe you an explanation, and I'll make everything plain in a moment. You see, my wife was a Miss Dekkar—

Scut. Dekkar! [Rises, terrified.]

Grin. Yes. Poor Tom Dekkar, your friend, was her brother. We named our Tommy after him. She's her brother's sole legatee, and we found these promissory notes of yours among his papers. [Takes out the notes and proffers them.]

Scut. My notes! [Gulping in dismay.]

Grin. I hate to bother you, but as executor, you know!

Scut. [To himself.] And I read this man to sleep with Swinburne!

Grin. I know you are hard up, but you live so deucedly high. What a lot of money you've been spending on me, for instance!

Scut. Don't reproach me with that, old fellow—don't.

Grin. On the contrary, I've been thinking how to get you out of your scrape.

Scut. [Brightening.] No! Have you?

Grin. There's a lady I know—a cousin of my wife's.

Scut. Another Dekkar?

Grin. Yes, belongs to the elder branch.

Scut. The elder! A double-decker, I suppose! Much older?

Grin. Oh, that's a mere detail. She's very wealthy—quite a business-woman—manages her own affairs. I expect her in New York every day to close a trade about some lots. If you make up your mind to sail in and win, I'll telegraph her to come up at once on important business.

Scut. [Dolefully.] I'll try. But what's the use? I haven't any luck making matches for myself or anybody else.

Grin. Make your mind easy, I'll get my wife to manage Eutycia, and the thing is as good as done.

Scut. Eutycia! [Rubbing his chin with some misgiving.]

Grin. Yes. Nice name—isn't it?

Scut. [Nods gloomily.] Yes. Well—all right. When you telegraph to your wife, wire her my regards and enclose a kiss to—Tommy. [They shake hands. HOWELL enters, R. U. E., shown in by TRUFFLES; he carries a small bouquet of roses. TRUFFLES goes to VIVA's room to announce him.]

Scut. [Going to meet him.] Ah, old fellow! [Takes his hand and brings him down—shaking hands warmly. Aside.] You may possibly be able to congratulate me, after all. I think it'll turn up all right. Adam is coming to the rescue.

Howell. What, are he and Mrs. Osprey going to—

Scut. Heaven forbid! No; things are merely reversed. I don't marry him—he marries me. [Nods and winks, and takes GRINNIDGE's arm and they go off, L. U. E.]

How. [Calls after him.] My regards to the bride. [Turns to front.] I wonder who she is.

Val. [Enters, r. door.] A bouquet! How very like a lover!

How. [Turns, surprised.] Mrs. Osprey! What a surprise. [Bows and extends bouquet with a flourish.] Permit me to lay at your feet my respectful salutations. [Coolly places the bouquet on the piano.]

Val. [Who had extended her hand, expecting the flowers.] Good morning.

How. "Good morning." How short, and yet how full of meaning. To some it signifies nothing but the ordinary greeting, but the finer ear detects in it the echo of regret for the parting of yesterday and the hope of a welcome with to-morrow.

Val. What a remarkable ear! Not only finer, but longer than ordinary, I should say. [Laughs.] Now tell me, what induces you to hold forth in this solemn manner so soon after breakfast?

How. Solemn! I defy anyone to be solemn when that smile creeps into your eyes. [Steps back in apparent alarm.] Don't, please, don't.

Val. Don't what?

How. You are meditating some mischief. [Looks around, alarmed.] I feel I'm in danger.

Val. Oh, reassure yourself.

How. I feel that you've laid a trap or set a mine, and you are watching to see me tread on it and fly in the air.

Val. I lay a trap for you! You flatter yourself. [Laughs.] Am I really to suppose that you don't know what is going on here?

How. You know I'm a comparative stranger in the city. This is my first leave of absence in two years.

Val. Then I'll enlighten you. [Crosses, R.] A loving father is sitting in there. [Points off C.] And a tender daughter is waiting in there. [Points, R. U. E.] Before me stands a trembling suitor, with a bouquet and a well-prepared speech, inwardly groaning at being kept from the object of his adoration. Don't fret, you won't have to groan long. This frightful woman is going to leave you and your inamorata together.

How. [Nettled.] I assure you, upon my word of honor, that you utterly misunderstand the situation.

Val. Really. Then I must be exceedingly stupid.

How. I can imagine how the mistake arose. Judge Van Ryker, good-natured old creature, in his playful way drops certain hints—my dear old governor coincides—and I smile and simper at their railillery; very vain and foolish of me, but what wouldn't I smile and simper at up to a very recent period—owing to a want of—of—a—a-coherency—that's it, coherency! in my thoughts or fancies, or feelings? And that induced an appearance of apparent acquiescence, which may—might—have been misinterpreted, and for which I am unfeignedly sorry.

Val. There seems to be a lingering want of coherency still.

How. I mean to be plain—and I will be. I never had a single thought of Miss Van Ryker.

Val. Oh, stop ! stop ! I am not the person to tell that to.

How. [Forcibly.] Yes, you are the person. I want you to know it, I wish you to understand. [Advances.]

Val. [Retreating, over.] I won't hear another word. You are speaking to me as if— [Nervously.]

How. [Eagerly.] As if what ?

Val. As if I were as incoherent as yourself, which I am not. I never smile and simper, and am never guilty of apparent acquiescence when I mean nothing. Good-by ! [Offers her hand.]

How. [Taking it.] Dear Mrs. Osprey ! Why, how my hand trembles ! or is it yours ? [She snatches her hand away.] Please, don't go ; I have a sudden thought—you ought to know it now. But perhaps you don't care to hear anything more I have to say—

Val. [Sternly.] Well ?

How. You will hear it ? Thanks ! But I don't know how to express it, except by an illustration. Imagine you are seated at table—at a table d'hôte. [She looks disappointed.] A dish is handed to you, which you decline, with a languid air. The waiter is going to take it to your neighbor, when you steal a glance at it. That looks tempting. You recall the waiter—you take it—it is delicious ! And you can't imagine why you ever refused it. *That* is what is happening to me now. [She looks interested.] At the very moment that you said "Good-by," a question came into my mind to which I can find no answer.

Val. [In a low tone.] What question ?

How. Everyone will say, here is a young, rich, and lovely creature who is yours if you only speak the word. [She looks at him sternly.]

Val. Well, I declare !

How. [Unheeding her.] Why should I not speak that word ? Is there any reason why I should not go at once—

Val. Lieutenant Everett !

How. Go at once to Miss Van Ryker's father ? [He does not look at her, and she has a chance to recover her equanimity. Short pause ; then he half turns.] You don't answer.

Val. There is no reason. Her father would say "yes," of course. But how about the mother ?

How. Mother ! She has no mother.

Val. She has a friend who must be considered as carefully.

How Indeed ! I comprehend. [Bows.]

Val. Perhaps you will allow this friend to put a question to you.

How. I shall listen with reverential respect. Consider me, my dear madam, as asking for the hand of your—daughter. Catechise me unrestrictedly.

Val. I have only one question—but I address it to your heart.

How. Oh ! I'm not prepared to go into the heart-business. It's extremely doubtful whether I have a heart. No one in the service, as far as I know, is troubled with one. Evidence of its existence is wanting.

Val. Mere subterfuge.

How. I think I ought to know. I may have had one, and have lost it.

Val. Are you sure you have not squandered it ?

How. Oh, no. Still something goes on ticking here as usual, but there are no works. Come—let's leave the heart.

Val. You're right. Let us leave the heart. The more I think, the more I'm convinced that you have mislaid yours. And until you can make up your mind to forget self and pride, and everything else, and, carried away by feeling as by a torrent, fly to the object of your affection, drop on your knees, clasp her hand in yours, pour forth a flood of eloquence, and refuse to get up unless she falls on your neck and weeps for joy—until you can do this, you won't really know what heart is, and you can't know what love is.

How. [Advancing.] Perhaps I can learn—

Val. No, no. [Going up.]

How. You can teach me.

Val. Never !

How. Why not ? You are to me—

Val. I am to you—I am only your—mother-in-law ! [Bows graciously and exits laughing, c.]

How. And I thought I knew womankind—thoroughly. I am an ignoramus. But the first thing is to get out of the muddle I'm floundering in here ; of course, it won't be easy. The simplest way is to go directly to the father. [Goes to door, c. resolutely, then pauses.] Or perhaps it would be better to go straight to the daughter. [Goes to r. u. e. resolutely, then pauses.] On further reflection, I had better go home and lay a regular plan of attack and retreat. [Goes to c.]

Benny. [Enters from r. u. e.] Oh, lieutenant, don't run away.

How. [Nettled.] I'm not running away

Ben. I know what you are here for.

How. Do you?

Ben. You propose to propose to Viva.

How. You appear to take it very calmly. [*Aside.*] Egad, perhaps I can stimulate him to cut me out. [*Aloud.*] Only a few days ago you revered the very ground she walked on—and now you seem disposed to let me have a walk-over.

Ben. Oh, I shall interfere at the proper moment.

How. You should have interfered some time ago. [VIVA enters, R. U. E., unobserved.] I don't understand your conduct, sir; you owe me an explanation. When a man loves a girl he doesn't wait to declare himself until the family is about to announce her engagement to somebody else. As soon as you perceived my intentions you should have gone to the young lady, dropped on your knees, clasped her hands in yours, poured forth a torrent of eloquence, and refused to get up until she fell on your neck and wept for joy. That's the way to do it.

Ben. [Coolly.] That's the way I did it.

How. You did?

Ben. Yes. When I made up my mind.

How. Bravo! [Slaps him on the back.]

Ben. I've settled everything.

How. [Clasps his hand.] You have!

Viva. [Advancing.] Yes, we've settled everything.

Ben. My own! my darling!

Viva. There's only papa to consider.

How. [Confidentially.] Well, let's begin to consider papa.

Ben. What? Will you stand by us?

How. My children, consider yourselves married. [To BENNY.] Go home and leave the rest to me.

Ben. I say, you're not going to try that waltz-business over again.

How. Honor bright!

Ben. I dance this time, remember. [Goes up.] She's my partner. [Throws a kiss to VIVA.] Good-by! [Exits, L. U. E.]

How. Charming fellow! [To VIVA.] I congratulate you.

Viva. [Bashfully.] What will you think of me?

How. I shall always think of you as a dear little kitten. At the beginning of our acquaintance you showed me two dear little velvet paws—and now I find you coming to the scratch.

Viva. Don't scold. This is the happiest day of my life, and I begin to like you exceedingly.

How. Flattered, I'm sure.

Viva. As I would like a friend, you know. [Crosses, L.

How. Certainly. I shouldn't like to be liked as you'd like an enemy, no matter how Christian your disposition might be.

Viva. Isn't it wonderful? I must talk to you, for I feel that if I didn't tell everything to somebody I should go wild. I knew I liked Benny, but I didn't know how much until I learned it from him. I've been laughing and crying—my heart is so full—so—so full! [Bursts into tears, and involuntarily lays her head on his shoulder. He smooths her hair, and glances toward door of BENNY's exit.]

How. [Aside.] I hope he won't come back. [Aloud, soothingly.] There, there—have a little cry—it'll do you good.

JUDGE VAN RYKER enters, c., sees them, throws up his hands, then runs off rubbing his hands with joy, and returns, dragging on GENERAL.

Judge. There! Look there!

Viva. [Screams.] Papa! [Runs off, R. U. E.

How. By Jove! this is a pretty mess.

General. [Advances.] My son!

How. Allow me! [Trying to avoid him, runs into the JUDGE's arms.]

Judge. Our son! [Both take a hand, and he struggles to free himself as

CURTAIN FALLS.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*An elegant apartment in Mrs. OSPREY's city residence. Door leading to her boudoir at back, R. C.; also door of entrance at back, L. C. In centre of stage a divan and beside it a table, with a screen of photographs. Writing-table with materials down R., near window. Time just past noon.*

CHERRY, a very smart maid, appears in entrance at rear, directing CRUSTY, the man of all work, to bring in a large valise, hat-box, etc.

Cherry. Put 'em right here, until Mrs. Osprey directs you where to take 'em.

Crusty. But—— [*Looking round for a spot.*]

Cherry. Well, hold 'em in your arms till she comes.
[*Calls off.*] This way, Mrs. Laburnam; Mrs. Osprey will be here directly.

MRS. LABURNAM enters, L.U.E., in travelling suit.

Mrs. Laburnam. Very good. Are you sure she's up yet? It's only one o'clock, and you city people are such sleepers.

VALENTINE enters from r., in morning wrap, etc.

Valentine. Here I am to answer in person.

Mrs. L. Oh, my dear! [*They embrace and kiss.*]

Val. [*Brings her to sofa, c.*] Where do you drop from?

Mrs. L. Surprise, isn't it?

Val. Why didn't you send a telegram? I could have met you at the depot.

Mrs. L. Much obliged, but I hate meetings and greetings at a depot. Here we can squeeze each other to our hearts' content. [*Gives her a hug.*]

Crusty. Where shall I put the things, ma'am?

Val. In the room off the parlor. Cherry, show the way. [*CRUSTY and CHERRY exeunt, l., CHERRY taking MRS. L's hat, etc.*] You'll stay with me, I hope.

Mrs. L. If you care to have me?

Val. What a question! Your usual room is waiting for you. And now tell me, if it's not a secret, what brings you to the city in such haste?

Mrs. L. First of all—winter's coming on, and the country is as bare as a bald head; second, I've nothing to do; and third, I got this message yesterday. [*Reads telegram.*] "Come up at once to close for lots. Must be here in person. Other business also. Important. Signed, Adam Grinnidge."

Val. Why, I know him.

Mrs. L. Do you? Cousin by marriage; but don't put him on my list. Can't imagine what his "other important business" means; and I know there's no hurry about the lots. But when I read those two little magic words on the telegram, "New York," I was seized with such a longing for the great, big, bustling, dear old city, that I cut the country, and here I am.

Val. I hope you may enjoy it. It makes my head whirl here.

Mrs. L. Makes your head whirl? That's what I enjoy.

[*Throws open the window, r., and inhales the air.*] Oh, that delicious, noisy, rattling street. Oh, you bubbling, ever babbling Babylon ! How I love your ceaseless sounds. What a change from the eternal birds and crickets. [*Inhales again.*] And this air ! How thick, and muggy, and lovely—not a trace of ozone ! [*Closing the window.*] How I hate that ozone !

Val. [*Laughs.*] But ozone is very healthy.

Mrs. L. So am I, therefore we don't agree. I take to bad city-air as a duck to water.

Val. You're the same as ever. What a pity you never married again. Why don't you ?

Mrs. L. [*Sitting.*] Well, my dear, it doesn't altogether rest with me. Perhaps I'd like to—but when one gets past a certain point—

Val. Are you fishing for a compliment ?

Mrs. L. Not a bit of it. But I was saying, when we get old enough to know what's what, we wish to choose—and so do the others, unfortunately. Once upon a time I'd have had anybody. I was particularly fond of the military, though — [*VALENTINE rises.* *MRS. L. looks at her.*] What's the matter with you ?

Val. With me ? Nothing.

Mrs. L. Indeed ! We are not to exchange confidences, then ? [*Rises.*]

Val. [*Going to her.*] That's unjust. At this moment, I long for a friend.

Mrs. L. I know it. [*VALENTINE looks at her.*] I noticed it by the way you received me. There was a certain something in the way you kissed me. [*VALENTINE turns away.*] Oh, I pretend to know something about kisses.

Val. [*Crossing away from her.*] There ! Let's talk of something else. [*Sits.*]

Mrs. L. [*Sitting beside her.*] Shall I tell you what your kiss revealed to me ?

Val. It's purely imaginary on your part, I assure you.

Mrs. L. [*Solemnly.*] Valentine, don't reject a friend when you most need one. Don't. Something is going on—what is it ?

Val. Nothing.

Mrs. L. I know better. There are lots of people angling for my little gold-fish. [*Pinches her ear.*]

Val. Oh, if you mean that, there are always two or three paying their addresses to my box in the safety-deposit vaults. That's nothing. They find sooner or later that the box is

empty and, pouf ! they're off like thistle-down. But I don't think of them—now. [Checks a rising enthusiasm, as MRS. LABURNAM gives her a look and a smile.] I mean, I never give them a thought.

Mrs. L. There is somebody. I congratulate you. [CHERRY appears in door-way, L.]

Cherry. Shall I unpack your things, ma'am ?

Mrs. L. No ; I'm coming. [CHERRY closes door, L., and exit, c. MRS. LABURNAM rises and takes VALENTINE'S hand.] Now tell me just one word—his name.

Val. [Breaking from her.] I tell you there's nothing to tell—at least, not now. Wait. Give a body a chance. By and by.

Mrs. L. Val ! Val ! I always said you were a lovely woman, but the way love becomes you—

Val. Now I fly. [Exit, confused and laughing, r. c.]

Mrs. L. If I thought it would improve my looks, I'd try it too. I would. But there's no doubt she's gone—heart, head, and heels. Who is the happy man ?

CHERRY enters, l. c., showing in HOWELL. She has a salver with a card on it.

Cherry. I don't know, sir ; I'll see. [HOWELL gives her particular instructions at back.]

Mrs. L. A young man with quite a military air. He's the lucky one. Oh, this New York ! I won't leave it this winter. [Exchanges bows with HOWELL, and exit, L., with an expression of delight.]

Cherry. But she never receives anybody so early.

Howell. Well, don't come away right off, if she says she won't see me. Just linger a moment—give her a chance to think twice.

Cherry. When she says "not at home," she means it.

How. I know. That's for people generally. If she says "not at home" now, repeat my name slowly and distinctly.

Cherry. It would be as much as my place is worth.

How. You shall retire on a pension. Don't be afraid. Besides, I will repeat your name with gratitude as long as I live.

Cherry. Oh, captain ! [Going r.]

How. By the way—what is your name ?

Cherry. Cherry, captain.

How. It's a beautiful name ! I'm very fond of cherries. You won't forget my name ?

Cherry. Oh no, captain.

How. No, not captain yet—lieutenant, merely. Hope to be captain—even general. But go along, and remember that I'm trembling over the verge of hope and despair.

Cherry. Yes, lieutenant. [Going.] Oh, Missis can't have the heart to refuse him. [Exit, c. r.]

How. And here's where she lives. Everything about her as lovely as herself. [VIVA speaks outside: "I'll find my way."] That's Miss Viva's voice.

VIVA enters, c. l.

Viva. [Stops on seeing HOWELL.] Good heavens! [About to retreat.]

How. Oh, Miss Van Ryker! flying from me! What have I done? [Goes forward, and extends his hand.]

Viva. [Avoiding his hand, and coming down quickly.] No, no, Mr. Everett; stay over there! [Points to r.] We can't keep far enough from each other.

How. Oh, I see. You are still thinking of our pretty group yesterday, and the discovery. It was a frightful discovery. We were caught.

Viva. [Ashamed.] Lieutenant, it was the first time in my life.

How. It was the first time in my life, too—that I was ever caught. What did your papa say?

Viva. Papa! Why, there's the mischief. He was delighted. He is still laboring under the horrible delusion that we are engaged.

How. [Frowns.] Didn't you tell him?

Viva. I didn't dare tell him anything; I ran to my room, locked the door, and cried myself nearly blind, and this morning I stole out, and came to find Mrs. Osprey and ask her what on earth I'm to do.

How. [Quickly.] No, no. Don't tell her anything about it. [Soothingly.] Make your mind perfectly easy. I'll speak to your father at once, and I'll use every precaution not to involve you and not to hurt his feelings.

Viva. [In tears.] Poor papa rejoices so much over our engagement. Oh, lieutenant, suppose we should have to get married to each other after all. [Approaching him, crying.]

How. [Retreats.] For goodness' sake, compose yourself. That's exactly how it happened yesterday.

Viva. What will become of Benny?

How. Benny! [Recovers his nerves.] Oh, he'll bear up.

Viva. You don't know how frightened the thought of him makes me. It all comes from a bad conscience. I saw him

coming, round the corner as I ran up the steps, and I hid in the vestibule. Isn't that terrible—to have to fly from my own Benny? [BENNY enters gayly.]

Benny. Aha! I've caught you.

Viva. [Gives a shriek and flies over from him.] Oh, Benny!

Ben. Did I frighten you? [Nods to HOWELL.] Good morning.

How. Good morning. [They shake hands.]

Viva. [Amazed.] What?

Ben. [Going to her.] I actually fancied that you ran away from me. [Looks at her.] What a long face!

Viva. Oh, Benny! if you knew all.

Ben. [Looks from one to the other.] Anything fresh occurred?

Viva. [Contritely.] Not to-day, but yesterday.

Ben. Oh, I understand! The discovery! Weeping maiden on manly shoulder. Oh, yes, I know all about that. The lieutenant came to me at once and told me everything. We laughed ourselves hoarse.

Viva. Why, you are not jealous any more.

Ben. Well, not of him. Our army, though small, is entirely trustworthy. [Takes HOWELL's hand.] Friends for life —eh, old fellow?

How. Irrevocably pledged.

Viva. Oh, how nice.

Ben. And now I'll tell you both something to make you laugh. Who do you suppose has taken me to his bosom? [To VIVA.] Your papa!

Viva. That's impossible!

How. How did you manage it?

Ben. As soon as he supposed you two were engaged, he couldn't lavish too much kindness on your humble servant. I called last night to congratulate him, and he thinks me the best behaved and most sensible young man in town. He opened several bottles of champagne and assured me that he intended to make my fortune. We drank to everybody's health, and broke up at one o'clock.

Viva. While I was crying myself to sleep alone in my room. Benny, I don't recognize you at all.

Ben. I don't recognize myself. As I looked in the glass this morning, I inquired who that conceited rascal was—and guess what reply I got? [Puts his arm round her.]

Viva. What?

Ben. [Taking her hand.] That the fellow was the proud

possessor of this dear little hand, and might be excused for his vanity, because in less than an hour he was privileged to cover it with kisses. [Kisses it ardently. HOWELL discreetly goes up, and turns his back on them.]

Viva. [Bashfully.] Don't!

Ben. [Indicates HOWELL.] Isn't that a friend? [Kisses her cheek.] Oh, what a lovely engagement we shall have—short, but sweet.

Viva. Nothing is certain yet.

Ben. Nothing but love. Oh, how you have inspired me! I feel as if I could rival Raphael, Rubens, Phidias, Praxiteles—all of 'em! [Suddenly.] Let's go for a drive in the park.

Viva. Why?

Ben. We won't be disturbed there—and I've so much to tell you.

Viva. You can tell me on the way home—I must go now.

Ben. Can I go with you?

Viva. [Indicates HOWELL.] You can't leave him!

Ben. I can if you can. You're engaged to him. I'm not. VIVA taps his cheek softly—they go up noiselessly. HOWELL turns and detects them in door-way as they are giving each other a parting kiss.

How. Ahem!

Viva. Explain to him why I've got to go. [Exit, c. l.

Ben. I will. [Comes down to HOWELL, grasps his hand, shakes it, digs him in the side, winks at him, then departs without a word, and exits after VIVA.]

How. How ingenious! He'll overtake her at the bottom of the stairs.

CHERRY enters, R. C.

Cherry. Mrs. Osprey begs you to excuse her for a few moments, and to look over the album in the meantime.

How. Cherry, you are a messenger of joy. [Takes her head between his hands. She disengages herself and points warningly to door, r. HOWELL nods and points to door, r. CHERRY nods and puts her finger to her lips.] I see! [Very formal.] I will look at the album, Cherry, with impatience; where is it, my good girl?

Cherry. There, sir. [Points to table up c., and goes aside.] Isn't it all too romantic for anything? [Exit, c. HOWELL opens album. VALENTINE opens the door, r., cautiously, and holds it so as to remain unseen by the lieutenant, but wholly visible to audience. She is still in lace morning wrap.]

Valentine. Good morning, lieutenant. [She has a brush in her hand and appears to have interrupted her toilet.]

How. [Jumps up from the table and closes the screen.] At last, my dear Mrs. Osprey.

Val. [Half closes door.] No—stay where you are, and look at the photographs. I can't let you see me.

How. But—

Val. I only came to say that Mrs. Osprey cannot receive you at such an early hour. She rises very late, and is still at her toilet.

How. Oh, that's it—and I'm only to look at the pictures.

Val. Very nice, aren't they? How does the one on the last leaf please you?

How. [Opens screen and turns leaves rapidly.] I haven't got so far as that. [Looks at picture, delightedly.] It's she! [Pulls it out and puts it in his pocket, then advances a step, holding up screen.] Why, there's none on the last leaf.

Val. What?

How. See for yourself. [Advances rapidly. She slams the door and disappears.] I beg a thousand pardons. [Shakes the knob gently.] I'll go away. [She reopens the door, partially.] I almost forgot. But look for yourself. [Shows album with outstretched arm, and turning aside.] Nothing on the last page. See!

Val. [Aside.] The rascal! [Aloud.] Will you put that picture back instantly?

How. Oh, I couldn't think of it. [Goes and lays album back on table, open.]

Val. I give you three seconds. One—two—

How. I'll make a proposition. I'll bring my portrait in exchange.

Val. [Threateningly.] Am I to shut the door?

How. Not for the world. Here! [Takes photo. out of his pocket and hands it. She half closes the door as he advances.] But it's very hard.

Val. [Takes it.] And now, good-by! I really have no time to waste.

How. Ah, that's too bad.

Val. Why do you call at such an impossible hour?

How. I don't know. I'm confusing the hours of the day and the night in a marvellous way, now. I found myself at two o'clock this morning in Union Square, and learned from a trustworthy witness that I had been promenading for an hour between Lafayette and Lincoln.

Val. And you keep me from an important consultation with my dressmaker to tell me such a story ?

How. I've got something better to tell you.

Val. Very well, I shall hear it with pleasure, but not now. You must call again at a more respectable hour.

How. Make it early.

Val. Well, say six o'clock.

How. I shall be here at six punctually. And then—then I'll relate to you the end of my romance. [She smiles.] I hope you'll like it.

Val. I trust so. [Softly.]

How. Au revoir.

Val. Au revoir. [Closes door. He instantly knocks.]

How. Half a second more, please. [She opens the door.] They say you are literally rolling in wealth. Now, I'm starving, but I—I never yet let a poor beggar leave my door empty-handed.

Val. [Smiles.] Indeed ! [Hands out the photo.] Here, you poor beggar.

How. [Seizes it and retains her hand.] A thousand thanks.

Val. [Pulling gently, and holding door.] What are you doing ?

How. A good deed always gets its reward. [Kisses her hand.]

Val. Impudence ! [Withdraws her hand, and quickly presses it to her lips. HOWELL at same time kisses her picture.] Good-by. [Closes the door.]

How. Good-by. She's mine ! Huzza ! [Turns to exit, c., and meets SCUTTLEBY, who enters at that instant.] Ah, Scuttleby, old boy, that you ?

Scut. [Cynically.] Ah, Everett, old boy, that you ?

How. Scut, do me the favor to put on your glasses and look at me closely. Do you notice anything ?

Scut. [Inspects.] Been on a spree last night ?

How. No, but I'm fairly reeling with joy.

Scut. Ah, yes, I've heard something about it. Viva Van Ryker ! May I offer congratulations ?

How. For heaven's sake, don't go about spreading that story. There isn't a word of truth in it.

Scut. Pity ! There's a lot of money there.

How. [Confidentially.] I've done much better.

Scut. What ? A richer one ?

How. If I can get her, I wouldn't change with Croesus.

Scut. [Admiringly.] You don't say !

How. My fate is to be settled this evening at six o'clock.

When you hear the stroke of six, if you love me, let your sinful soul breathe a prayer ; for at that hour, not my bliss alone, but my life—you hear, old fellow, my life—will be decided.

[Exit, c. c.

Scut. The greatest mystery of this planet is how those penniless young officers get rich girls. And sometimes pretty ones, too ! But when we plain business men try our luck ! [Throws up his hands in despair and sighs.]

MRS. LABURNAM enters L. without her cloak and hat, carrying in her hand a written list. CHERRY also enters from C.

Cherry. Did you ring, ma'am ?

Mrs. Laburnam. Cherry, I want you to go to the nearest Elevated Railway book-stand and try to get me any or all of these books. I got the list from a paper. [Reads.] "New York and Vicinity"—"Thirty Miles around New York"—"Guide to New York and Westchester"—"How to see New York in Half the Time."

Scut. [Who has been manoeuvring to get a sight of her face, and finally recognizes her, steps forward as CHERRY takes the list and is about to go up.] Don't ! Don't send for any of that rubbish.

Mrs. L. [Amazed.] Sir !

Scut. The only reliable guide to New York stands before you.

Mrs. L. [Recognizes him.] Mr. Scuttleby ! Is it possible ?

Scut. I recognized Miss De Rensseller at a glance. [Motions to CHERRY to get out.]

Cherry. [Aside.] He calls her Miss De Rensseller. That must have been her maiden name. Oh, how I would like to stay.

[Exit, c. L.

Mrs. L. I'm afraid to think how many years it is since we met. And you remember me.

Scut. I have an astonishing memory for handsome faces.

Mrs. L. Oh, I haven't had anything like that said to me since I was twenty.

Scut. Ah, I remember you at twenty ! And I always said your midsummer would realize the promise of your spring—as it does.

Mrs. L. You haven't changed a bit. A compliment ready for every occasion, major !

Scut. Ah, no longer major, Miss De Rensseller. I gave up the militia when rheumatism took hold of me.

Mrs. L. And you are not aware, perhaps, that the Miss became a Mrs. ?

Scut. Ah ! [Regretfully.]

Mrs. L. And soon after, a—widow.

Scut. [Joyfully.] Oh !

Mrs. L. Do you remember our last meeting ? I do.

Scut. Certainly—at Saratoga. It was the last hop of the season. You were lovely. I can tell you so now.

Mrs. L. You told me so then.

Scut. No doubt ; I always tell the truth. I recollect we strolled out in the park and stood by the spring in the moonlight. The soft breezes fanned your fluffy curls against my cheek, and I pressed a chaste kiss upon your marble brow.

Mrs. L. No, you didn't. You never dared do that.

Scut. Didn't I ?

Mrs. L. I never stood with you at a spring in the moonlight.

Scut. [Aside.] It must have been somebody else. That's bad—bad ! [Aloud.] I stood there—I remember *that*, perfectly. [Suddenly.] Let me supply the omission. [Advancing.]

Mrs. L. You good-for-nothing ! [Retreating.]

Scut. [Sighs.] Ah, the happy, happy hours ! Gone, all gone !

Mrs. L. [Sits.] How dismal that sounds !

Scut. [Sits.] I have dismal moments. Within a few weeks, all may be over with me forever. [Nurses his knee.]

Mrs. L. Why, what do you mean ?

Scut. I'm to be married. I don't know the lady, but I feel in advance the reverence due to age.

Mrs. L. If you don't like it—why do you do it ?

Scut. I don't do it—Grinnidge does it. Grinnidge is a friend of mine.

Mrs. L. Grinnidge !

Scut. It's a cousin of his wife's—a Mrs. Eutycia something. Do you know her ?

Mrs. L. [Aside.] This is getting to be amusing.

Scut. She belongs to an elder branch of the family—quite elder.

Mrs. L. Indeed !

Scut. Ever met her ?

Mrs. L. Never met her.

Scut. She's rich.

Mrs. L. And you want her money ?

Scut. No, I don't want it.

Mrs. L. That's better.

Scut. Grinnidge wants it. The fact is, Grinnidge holds my notes, you understand.

Mrs. L. [Aside.] This was the "important business" he telegraphed me about. The wretch offers up his wife's cousin as a sacrifice to his cupidity.

Scut. My intended has been telegraphed for.

Mrs. L. She may not come.

Scut. Oh, yes, she will. And if I have the good luck to please the venerable relic, I'm married—doomed.

Mrs. L. Cheer up. She may be quite a tolerable person.

Scut. It's awfully good of you to encourage me, but it's not my luck. Grinnidge didn't enthuse particularly on that point. He even dropped the remark, yesterday, that there was a charm about *every age*—if you could only find it. The trouble I expect is—to find it.

Mrs. L. So it won't be a love-match—only a business-bargain.

Scut. Well, mixture of both. She finds the love—

Mrs. L. [Interrupts.] And you mean the business. [Offers her hand.] I congratulate you.

Scut. It's not worth while. [GRINNIDGE is heard outside, saying: "I'll go right up."] [MRS. LABURNAM and SCUTTLEBY both rise.]

GRINNIDGE enters, c.

Grinnidge. [Advancing gayly to MRS. LABURNAM.] I have just heard of your arrival. How do you do?

Scut. [Alarmed.] Why, Adam—

Grin. [Aside to him.] Here she is, my boy. Your bride!

Scut. What!

Mrs. L. [Introducing herself.] Mrs. Eutycia something, major.

Grin. Mrs. Eutycia Laburnam—Scuttleby.

Scut. Downed again! [Falls against sofa, c.]

Mrs. L. Tableau!

Scut. [Trying to apologize.] I'm exceedingly—I beg you to believe that I never—well, I throw myself on your mercy. What can I do?

Mrs. L. [Laughs.] There's one thing you are not likely to do—sacrifice your precious life at the altar, just yet.

Val. [Enters, r., dressed. Surveys the scene; all silent.] What's the matter?

Mrs. L. My dear, the sensation of my life. Only fancy! [Takes her apart to tell her.]

Grin. [Crosses to SCUTTLEBY.] She seems to be in a very good humor. Now's your time. The train is waiting for you. Limited express! Jump aboard. Follow her up.

Scut. [Furious, but in low tone.] Follow her up! You're an ass. [VALENTINE and MRS. LABURNAM burst out laughing.]

Grin. What are the ladies laughing at?

Scut. Me—me, you fool—don't you see that it's all up? There's been a collision on the road—a regular smash-up. I don't know whether I am among the killed or missing.

Grin. Oh, I'm sorry for that. Well, we must try somewhere else. Take the next train.

Scut. No; I think I'll take the steamer next time. But you needn't trouble yourself any more to dispose of me, I withdraw the property.

Grin. But the notes, Scut, the notes. How about your notes?

Scut. You shall have your money, confound it, if—if—if I have to pay you myself. Good morning. [Goes up.]

Grin. [Following him and taking letter from pocket.] My wife wrote me to give you her regards, and—

Scut. [Turning on him.] Please have the goodness to return them—[Taking his hand.]—personally!

Grin. Thank you. I will, old fel. [SCUTTLEBY comes down again; GRINNIDGE goes to take leave of the ladies awkwardly.] Good afternoon, Mrs. Osprey. Good afternoon, Eutycia; I'll see you again. Don't be hard on—[Awed by her stern look, exit, c.]

Scut. [Aside.] That fellow is my evil genius. I try to marry him, and he's married already. He tries to marry me, and it comes to a separation before we're engaged. It's no use. I'm a wreck. I'm going to drift.

Val. [Coming forward with MRS. LABURNAM, both laughing.] You don't appear to be happy in your match-making, cousin.

Scut. [Gloomily.] Have your laugh out, ladies. It's the last you'll have at my expense.

Mrs. L. How so?

Scut. This kind of fun is killing. I can't stand it. There's a change working in me. You may not believe it, but I actually feel ashamed of myself—for the first time.

Mrs. L. Nonsense!

Scut. Yes, I'm ashamed of myself. I always had the knack of keeping my head up, whatever happened. But something has given way, and I can't brazen this out. You've caught me, and I acknowledge it.

Val. Bravo !

Scut. [To MRS. LABURNAM.] I'm getting crooked, but it's your fault.

Mrs. L. Mine !

Scut. Yes, yours. If you had been at the spring at the right moment, that moonlight night, who knows what might have happened ? I know I'd make a good husband. I'm as quiet as a mouse—always go out early—never want any dinner at home—never make any noise when I do come home—and I've always wanted to get married. But I'm not in the market any more. I begin a new life.

Val. How ?

Scut. I don't know yet—but first, I'll pay my debts—I'll sell out. Sell everything—furniture, pictures, horses, houses ; I forgot—my houses are gone already. That'll pay about half. As to the other half —

Val. Well, if you are in earnest, Cousin Phenix, you know you needn't go far to find the balance.

Scut. I won't go a step. No, you've paid for me over and over again, and never asked for it. I'm much obliged to you, Cousin Val, but it wasn't good to yourself or to me. It made me reckless. You've got *that* to answer for. I can't say I have any confidence left in you. No, I'm going to somebody who'll make me pay.

Mrs. L. But where will you find anybody ?

Scut. Oh, I've got a friend.

Mrs. L. [Nettled.] Indeed !

Scut. He's one of the lucky dogs of this planet. He's going to marry a female Crœsus. It's to be settled at six o'clock this evening. [VALENTINE looks surprised.] At half-past six I'll be at his elbow. When a man marries millions he can't refuse to lend a few thousand. When I've got that off my mind, I'll buckle down to work.

Mrs. L. What work ?

Scut. Don't know. But I suppose my slice of bread is waiting somewhere for me to earn it. To-night I'm going to sit down in my room, over a good cigar and a bottle of champagne, and think.

Val. Hem !

Scut. That's when the ideas come to *me* ! After that, if I don't see my way clear to earn anything with what I know, then I'll go to work and learn something else—eh ? [Looks from VALENTINE, who is gravely pulling at her fan with downcast eyes, to MRS. LABURNAM, who is equally grave. He hes-

itates and falters a little.] Or, do you think, I'm—I'm too old to learn?

Val. [Heartily.] Cousin Phenix, I believe I've done you an injustice sometimes. But I was not the only one. Don't be downhearted. You need friends. I have needed them a long time. Now I begin to find one or two. [Offers her hand to him.]

Scut. Thank you. Who's the other? [VALENTINE laughs and goes up, as CHERRY enters with a card and hands it to her, then exits at a sign from her.]

Mrs. L. Major, I'll make you a proposition.

Scut. What is it?

Mrs. L. I'm a business-woman. Two heads are better than one—suppose you ask me to supper somewhere this evening, and we'll both think over that bottle of champagne together.

Scut. Good! Not half a bad idea.

Mrs. L. I have to meet Grinnidge and attend to a little business near by. You can call for me. Then suppose we go to the theatre afterward. I suppose there's something worth seeing somewhere, eh?

Scut. [Delighted.] Capital—I'll do it. Oh, you are a business-woman. [Going.] I'll run and get the tickets at once. Au revoir, ladies. [Stops at door.] I had intended to turn over a new leaf to-day—but what's the odds, I'll begin to-morrow. [Exit, c. l.

Mrs. L. Now, I must go and get ready. Will you come?

Val. [Holding up card.] Sorry, I can't. Somebody is here and waiting to give me a lecture.

Mrs. L. Perhaps he'll be over it when I come back. If not, remember you're engaged for the evening. [Exit, l.

Val. [Touches a bell, and looks at card.] Judge Van Ryker. Now for a scolding! I neglected my sentry-duty, yesterday. [CHERRY shows in JUDGE VAN RYKER, c. and then exits.] I know what you're going to say. [Gives him her hand.] I deserve it all. I didn't succeed in keeping Viva and Benny apart, nor in bringing the lieutenant to her feet.

Judge. Don't say one word. You succeeded admirably. I'm ever so much obliged.

Val. I don't understand.

Judge. You hadn't been gone from the house half an hour, when I came in and found my daughter in the arms of the lieutenant.

Val. What! What lieutenant?

Judge. What lieutenant? Why, young Everett. In his

arms and sobbing with joy on his bosom, and he soothing her as only a lover can. Nothing was wanting but my blessing, and I gave it.

Val. Are you telling me a fairy tale?

Judge. I can't explain it, unless Viva, seeing how bent I was on the match, and convinced by your arguments—

Val. My arguments! [Suppressing her feelings and half gasping in anger.]

Judge.—And overcome by the gallant lieutenant's broadside of entreaties, gave up and accepted the inevitable.

Val. [Who has taken a stride up and down, now stops and presses her hand to her head.] I don't comprehend it.

Judge. You can imagine my joy. I had set my heart on that match, for the fellow bewitched me. I've lain awake, night after night, dreaming of him for a son-in-law, just as you'd dream of him for a husband—

Val. [Hysterical.] I—I dream of him—you mistake if you think I—

Judge. I beg pardon. I only said it to illustrate. But let me tell you the whole story. I sat up late last night and figured what I'd give her, and how they'd live, when, all of a sudden, in the stillness of the night, it seemed to me as if a voice whispered: "Are you sure she'll be happy?" It had never struck me before. If her mother had been living, she would have thought of that. Perhaps she put the thought into my head. At all events, I rose up and went to Viva's room, and there was her light burning and she not gone to bed, but lying on the sofa and crying fit to break her heart. Well, at the sound of her sobs I felt as if they had been married, and he had begun to ill-treat her. And I began, ha, ha! I began to hate him—actually to hate him. You can't understand that, can you? [Goes to her.]

Val. [Vindictively.] Possibly I can.

Judge. Then I recollect that I found her crying in his arms, and I thought perhaps he knew she would be miserable with him, and yet that he would marry her. Marry her, confounded his cold-hearted, calculating selfishness—marry her for—for her money.

Val. That was only your fancy, though. [Sits.]

Judge. Was it? It's not often a young fellow can hook such a gold-fish as my daughter. Well, this morning my mind was made up, and I meant to end the whole business—so I posted off to my gentleman, and told him I thought it was only fair to inform him that I was not as rich as people thought me,—Lord! you should have seen him turn red and

pale, and then try to wriggle out gracefully, mumbling something about my being mistaken in his intentions. I helped him, you may be sure of that, and we parted—we parted good friends, but forever. I tell you, my dear, we've both been mistaken in that young man.

Val. I begin to think so too. [Rises.]

Judge. But the scales have fallen from my eyes. He'll simply flatter and fib to every girl till he gets the richest, and then fling the others over. But he won't get mine. I'm going to have no tears in my house. Come round and help me to cheer Viva. Bring your merriest laugh, for there never was a woman as jolly as you are. Oh, how you see through such fortune-hunters, eh? [Gives her his hand.]

Val. Yes, sooner or later.

Judge. And you can hold me to *this* solemn promise—I'll never interfere with my daughter's love-affairs again. She may marry any honest, industrious, good-mannered young man she fancies. I've said it, and I'll stick to it—and to him. Good-by. [Exit, c. l.

Val. [Remains in thought a moment, sinking into a chair, c. Then she suddenly starts up.] I won't believe it. To be here at one instant with an avowal trembling on his lips, and to speak with a voice that would make distrust melt away as ice in sunshine; and yet, but a few hours before, to have held another woman in his arms and talked to her of marriage! It is hypocrisy beyond belief. [Takes a few steps to l.] No, I'll rather believe that I have deceived myself—that it was a jest. I can punish him for that, but I need not despise him. [Looks at clock.] Only a quarter of an hour. He is to return at six.

SCUTTLEBY enters c., gayly.

Scuttleby. I've got the tickets. I can promise you a royal night. [Looks at watch.] Nearly six. What time are you? [Looks at clock.] By Jove! my fate's to be decided at six. Are you sure your clock's right?

Val. [Sudden thought.] Cousin Phenix, let me ask you a question.

Scut. Certainly.

Val. You spoke of a friend from whom you expected help?

Scut. Yes.

Val. And he was going to propose for the hand of a very wealthy person; have I got it right?

Scut. Yes. That's it.

Val. You know all about him, of course. Tell me, had he not offered himself to another lady?

Scut. Oh, but that's off.

Val. Because he found a richer prize! And he is to secure her at six o'clock?

Scut. Exactly.

Val. And the name of this paragon of honor is Lieutenant Everett?

Scut. Well, but—

Val. That will do. You see I know the whole story.

Scut. If you know the lady, I hope you won't let on about this. That would be a very poor joke to play on him.

Val. Don't be alarmed. Lieutenant Everett and I know how far to carry a jest. If not, we should soon be taught. [Touches a bell. Aside.] My picture! I will have that back, and that ends it. [Writes.]

Scut. Now, what in thunder is she up to? Writing. To whom? [Looks at watch.] Three minutes to six. She can't do any mischief in three minutes. The devil himself couldn't bedevil anybody in three minutes.

Val. [Reads what she has written. Still aside.] "I thought I had given my picture to a man who was at least worthy of respect; you thought you had asked it of a woman who possessed a large fortune. We were both mistaken. Send back my portrait and let us drop the curtain on the farce." [Folds letter and writes address, touching bell again sharply. MRS. LABURNAM enters L., dressed to go out.]

Mrs. Laburnam. Well, my dear, will you come with us?

CHERRY enters, c.

Val. No.

Mrs. L. Why, what's the matter?

Val. [Places her finger on her lips, and gives the letter to CHERRY.] Take this letter to its address. Go yourself, and at once. [CHERRY takes the letter.]

Scut. I'd give a hundred dollars to see that address. [Picks up his hat and turns suddenly, as CHERRY comes from VALENTINE with the letter in her outstretched hand. He does this so suddenly as to brush the letter from the girl's fingers.]

Cherry. Oh!

Scut. I beg pardon. [Picks up letter, reads its address and hands it to her.]

Cherry. Yes, sir.

[Exit c., tittering.]

Scut. [Aside.] To Everett!

Val. [Aside to Mrs. LABURNAM.] I must be alone—take him away, and keep him.

Mrs. L. That's asking a good deal. But for a limited period—anything to oblige. [To SCUTTLEBY.] Well, sir.

Scut. At your service. [Aside.] To Everett! Then she doesn't know the lady. Scuttleby, you're safe—safe, my boy, this time. [Exit c., gallantly, with Mrs. LABURNAM.]

Val. It will take Cherry five minutes to reach his hotel. That will be time enough to prevent his coming. [Sits at fireside, her head leaning on her hand.] I won't see him again; I cannot. At all events, I am punished for my folly. With every other man I've been on my guard. [Clock strikes six, slowly.] With this one I stood like a child with open hands, and trusted him. Yes, I am punished. [She stops at the last stroke of the clock, and at the same moment CRUSTY appears, c.]

Crusty. Lieutenant Everett, ma'am.

Val. [Starts up.] He! [About to speak; checks herself.]

Crusty. [Not understanding her.] Ma'am?

Val. [Aside.] I will see him. [To CRUSTY.] Show him in. [CRUSTY exits.] He wishes to play the game to the end. So be it. It may be amusing. [HOWELL enters, shown in by CRUSTY.]

Howell. [In a formal tone.] Mrs. Osprey! [CRUSTY exits, and he advances a step, and in a warmer tone.] At last I find you alone. [As he advances, she unconsciously withdraws a step.] You smile at my haste, my impetuosity. It's not like me, as you have known me, but I flew up the stairs three steps at a bound, and I don't know whether I've got my breath or my senses yet. But I beg you to hear me—will you?

Val. [Coolly.] Certainly. Pray speak. [They sit.]

How. [Puzzled at her tone.] I beg your pardon if I don't begin in the cold, conventional way. [Warming by degrees.] But I fear I've thrown everything to the winds—prudence, caution, all but honest, straightforward purpose. If I stop to choose my words I know I shall stammer like a school-boy. Once in every man's life he feels humble, he don't know himself, he descends to beg, and I beg that you will listen to me, and with the same candor I shall use in saying what I have to say.

Val. [Looking steadily at him.] I will.

How. [Confounded.] You will—[Looks around in a lost way.] Somehow the place seems to have changed since I was here last. It's in the air. Something weighs on me. I flew here thinking that I only needed to see you, and the words would flow like a torrent. And now, as you look at me,

I feel under a spell—your words blow out everything that was lighted in me. Please don't look at me that way. It's not like you—not at all like the glance that falls on me from this picture. [Produces portrait.]

Val. [Snatches it from him.] Ah! my portrait!

How. I don't understand—

Val. Then understand me now, sir. If you have thought to favor me with the love you give and take as it suits your purpose, banish the incredible egotism or stupidity that prompted such an idea from this instant. Could you suppose a game so transparent was not certain of detection, and when detected would not be as certainly destroyed as I destroy this picture? [Tears it in pieces and throws it on the carpet.] And now—leave me.

How. [Seizes her passionately.] Leave you! Now, just when you have shown me that you love me, and love me more than I could dare hope for? Never!

Val. [Struggling to free herself.] I love you!

How. Yes. As sure as I adore you and as sure as I never gave a thought to that other.

Val. [Releasing herself.] It is not true.

How. True, I swear it. True as the fact that I had only one fear in speaking to you—the fear that you could not, would not say "yes" at the price that "yes" would cost you.

Val. What price?

How. The loss of your whole fortune.

Val. [Turning quickly.] You knew that?

How. I knew it before I ever saw you. I knew that you would have to become poor to make me endlessly rich. That made me hesitate—for what have I to offer in return? Nothing—nothing but a poor devil's love, a poor devil's heart and home.

Val. [Aside.] Oh, what have I done? That letter! that letter! [CHERRY enters at c., carrying a letter in her hand. She rushes up to her, and seizes it.] You have not delivered it?

Cherry. Yes'm. That's the old gentleman's answer.

Val. [Aside to her, breathlessly.] The old gentleman's?

Cherry. He was just coming out of the house and he took it, and as he saw it was addressed to "Mr. Everett," and nothing more—

Val. And you gave it to him?

Cherry. He took it and opened it.

Val. That will do. [Waves her off. CHERRY exits amazed. VALENTINE opens the letter.]

How. You seem agitated. Can I be of service ?

Val. [Avoiding him.] Oh, no, no, no ! It is nothing. [Reads letter aside.] "From the address of your letter, I thought it was meant for me and opened it. I shall take pleasure in handing it to my son, for whom I presume the insult—[She shudders.]—to be intended." [She crumples the letter, and staggers against a chair.]

How. There is something ; you can hardly stand. Let me know. Let me—

Val. I beg of you, don't ask me. [Aside.] I must see his father—explain—get that letter, and keep the knowledge of it from him. [Aloud.] Excuse me, Mr. Everett, I don't wish to seem rude, but I have just received a letter which I must answer in person—I must go at once—

How. [Bowing, as if to go.] In that case—

Val. [Detains him by a gesture.] No, no. You must not go ; and, least of all, with such a look ! [Beseechingly.] Won't you—wait for me ?

How. I !

Val. Till I come back ; then, and not till then, can I give you an answer to your—to what you have said.

How. [Trying to take her hand.] Oh, in that case—

Val. [Withholding it.] Afterward, when I come back. I will find you here, won't I ? [Entreating.]

How. If I only knew—

Val. But you cannot know—yet.

How. And you expect me to sit here quietly—and wait ! I can't stand suspense—I never could.

Val. [Nervously.] I know ; I'm just the same myself. My nerves twitch, and I'm all in a fever—but I calm myself.

How. Yes, but I can't calm myself.

Val. [Looking round for something to set him to work at.] Oh, yes ! It was only last night—I was sitting here, thinking and thinking.

How. Last night ! I was thinking and thinking, too, last night. Of whom were you thinking ?

Val. [Shyly.] I sha'n't tell you. But as I was looking round for something to fix my mind upon—something to distract me—[She is looking about her.]—my eyes fell upon this embroidery. [Picks up a frame of embroidery from the writing-table.] I had commenced it once, but found there was a flaw in the design, and I threw it aside, but last night I set myself to find it. I didn't succeed. Perhaps you can. This way, you see. You begin and count—one, two, three—cross ; one, two, three—and cross ; and I went on for hours and hours.—[He

looks up from the work to her.] I didn't discover the mistake, but I grew calmer. [Falters.] Won't you try it?

How. You propose to have considerable fun at my expense.

Val. It is not a jest. It's a favor. It's the only favor I ever asked of you. Please give me your hat, and take my embroidery. [She takes his hat and gives him the work. She runs and hides his hat in the cabinet, while he gazes helplessly at the work.]

How. But suppose somebody comes in.

Val. I'll leave word that nobody is to come in.

How. [Gazes at work helplessly.] I can never go through it.

Val. [Coaxes.] It's so easy. One, two, three—cross! There, sit here.

How. [Sits on sofa.] How is it, again? One, two, three—[He looks up.]

Val. Cross! That's it. Splendid! Begin again. [They go over the work together.]

Both. One, two, three—cross.

How. [Looks up.] You'll be back soon? [She nods, and points to work.] One, two, three—

Val. I'll be back *very* soon.

How. [Nods.] Cross!

Val. Cross! No, as happy as possible. [He is about to seize her hand.] Go on.

How. I am going on. One, two, three—I've lost my place.

Val. [She pats his shoulder, and he tries to kiss her hand.] You're doing splendidly. [Goes to door.]

How. [He nods and goes on.] One, two, three—cross.

Val. [Pausing at door.] No, I can't go away. Howell!

How. Yes! [He jumps up.]

Val. I don't know what I may say when I come back, but you shall know now that I thought of you, that you were always before me, that the dearest sound to me was your voice, that I could die only to hear you say again what you have said to me to-day.

How. Would you? Shall I say it again and again? [Tries to take her to his arms.]

Val. No, no. Wait. Wait here. Wait until I return.

How. Say no more. I'm the happiest! [Flies back to his work, and picks up embroidery cheerfully.] One, two, three—cross. One, two, three—cross! [She flies to the door and waves kiss after kiss to him as the

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*Library at GENERAL EVERETT'S. A few book-cases. In the centre a draped pedestal, with a copy of the bust of Hermes by Praxiteles, a fireplace down R., and a screen beside it. Easy sofa, c. Doors, R. and L. Window up R.*

The GENERAL enters from door at L., with VIVA hanging on his arm. She is in hat and street costume.

Viva. Now, general, you know everything, and I want you to tell me candidly if you don't think me a dreadfully wicked girl.

General. It would be against all my principles to harbor such a thought. But I will say that you deserve the same scolding that I gave my son this morning. How could you two young people have the heart to hoodwink your father and me so—so—

Viva. [Shyly.] Completely?

Gen. Unjustifiably! We had nothing in view but your happiness.

Viva. And I had nothing in view but the same thing exactly. And who was the best judge?

Gen. I don't know what Judge Van Ryker will say, but I forgive you. I couldn't help it. You have a pair of advocates in your head which there is no resisting.

Viva. Then let them plead for my papa, too. He intends to call on you; that's why I came beforehand, to prepare you. I was afraid, at first, but as soon as I heard at the door the lieutenant was not in, I took courage.

Gen. Then you are not at all afraid of me?

Viva. Oh, no. I rely on my two advocates.

Gen. You're a little witch, and somebody's son will be a happy fellow when he gets you. [Tom, a black footman, enters, with two cards on a salver, which he hands to the GENERAL.] Excuse me one moment. [Reads cards.] Mrs. Laburnam—Mr. Grinnidge.

Viva. [Crosses, L., alarmed.] Oh, dear! [Aside to GENERAL.] I don't wish them to see me here.

Gen. It's only a business-visit. The lady is going to buy a piece of property from me. I can show them into my study. Wait here. [To Tom.] Ask the lady and gentleman in. [Tom exits.] Sit here. [Arranges screen at fireplace, and she sits concealed from above.]

Viva. Am I safe here?

Gen. Perfectly. [He goes c., to meet MRS. LABURNAM and GRINNIDGE, who enter, r. c.]

Grinnidge. [Introducing.] General Everett, Eutycia. [To GENERAL.] My cousin, Mrs. Laburnam.

Gen. I have heard of punctual business-men, madam, but you are a model for both sexes. [Indicates door, l.] The papers are all in there, and a notary is waiting.

Mrs. Laburnam. Glad to hear it. I like to go right to the point at once. Has Adam arranged all satisfactorily?

Gen. Everything. Will you read the documents over until I come? [Shows the way, l.; opens door.]

Mrs. L. [Taking off her gloves as she follows.] Certainly. Fingers a little cramped, but I think I can make a tolerable autograph. This way? Thank you. Come, Adam. [Exit with Grinnidge, l. d.]

Gen. [Coming to VIVA.] Now you can come out.

Viva. Then I think I'd better escape while there's time. [Comes c.] I've kept you too long already, but you are so kind. [Offers her hand. He takes it.] But it seems to me that you look hurt, or troubled, or worried. I'm not the cause, am I?

Gen. No, it's a letter I received just now. A strange letter! [Brightening.] Never mind that. You don't know how sorry I feel that I'm not going to have you for a daughter. Might I dare ask the name of the lucky fellow who has outflanked my boy in your affections? [She hangs her head.] Well, never mind his name. What does he look like?

Viva. Oh, he's very handsome. Would you like to see him?

Gen. Oho, you have him in that locket already? [Points to her locket.]

Viva. [Reproachfully.] No. [Archly.] But if you were just to glance out of the window, I think you'd see him waiting on the corner. [Goes to window, up r.]

Gen. [Reaches window before her.] In the street—all this time?

Viva. [As GENERAL looks out.] He had to—I told him to. Do you see him? Why, he isn't there. Why, where is he? [Looks out of window, then back to GENERAL.] Why, general, where is he?

Gen. [Laughing.] I don't know. [Both look out.]

Viva. Not a sign of him. Oh dear! I wish I hadn't left him alone. He may be lost.

Gen. He must be somewhere there. [Both look out of window. BENNY appears in door, c.]

Benny. Viva, am I to wait any—

Viva. [Rushes to him.] Oh, here he is.

Gen. [Gravely.] We were frightfully alarmed.

Ben. How do you do, general? Pardon my abrupt visit—but as Viva didn't return in twenty minutes, as she promised—[Kisses her hand.]—you'll excuse me, I hope.

Gen. Certainly, when one hasn't seen one for twenty minutes. [Returns to window.]

Viva. Now, Benny, let us distinctly understand. After we are married I'm to be a dutiful wife, but when I tell you to wait anywhere, you mustn't stir from the spot.

Ben. It's a bargain—after we're married.

Gen. [Leaving window.] Young people, I don't know how you are prepared for the information, but I have just seen Judge Van Ryker coming down the street.

Viva. [Alarmed, to BENNY.] Oh, dear! I ought to have gone at once. [To GENERAL, crossing c.] Papa doesn't know anything as yet about us two.

Gen. Very well, then, suppose you wait in here—[Goes to door, r., down stage.]—until I hear what he has to say to me.

Ben. [Crosses, c.] Thank you, general. How thoughtful of you. Come, Viva.

Viva. No, sir! you stay here.

[Exit, r.]

Ben. I will, as long as I can. [JUDGE VAN RYKER enters, r. c.; GENERAL meets him. They shake hands. VAN RYKER is quite nervous.]

Judge. Ah, Everett, hope you're well. [Sees BENNY, and effusively.] Ah, Mr. Demaresq.

Ben. How do you do, sir? [Somewhat mechanically.]

Judge. [Looks at him, then turns to GENERAL.] I wanted to call; I never was so shocked in my life. That young scorpion, to beat us so.

Gen. [Cheerfully.] Oh, we'll get over it. We've seen some rougher weather in our time. [They get confidentially together, and sit, c. BENNY picks up a book and sits, r., distracted between the book and the door.]

Judge. Who could have foreseen that my girl, instead of being dead in love with your son, was all along alive to the attentions of that young scamp over there. I never felt so flat. 'Pon my life and soul, Everett, I feel cheap, I do indeed.

Gen. Let's forget all about it and laugh over the story in a quiet way. We remain friends as before.

Judge. And you don't bear any grudge? [GENERAL shakes his head, and offers his hand.] And your boy! I've heard it hinted that he's looking somewhere else. [GENERAL

draws himself up and withdraws his hand.] Well, well, I don't mean to be inquisitive ; I only wanted to be sure that he is really looking in another quarter. [GENERAL rises.] Only to be certain, you know, that he doesn't grieve after my Viva —that's all—that's all. [Pats GENERAL on shoulder.] That's all, I assure you. And now tell me what you think of that young chap over yonder. Fine, manly fellow, eh ? I want you to like him. He's perfectly crazy after my Viva. You'll see. I'll draw him out. [Aloud, so as to be heard by BENNY.] No, no, I have no fixed plans with regard to my daughter's hand as yet. [Winks at GENERAL. BENNY lowers his book and listens.] I don't think it would be hard to find a good son-in-law. [Turns to BENNY.] Do you, Mr. Demaresq ?

Ben. [Assumed indifference.] I really can't say, judge. You'll have to look around, I suppose, for the right article.

Judge. [Nettled.] Look around ! That's very funny. Take care, you young rascal, I may double the money I'm going to give my girl, and if I do, and then have another talk with the lieutenant—who knows ?

Gen. [Sternly.] Allow me, Judge Van Ryker ; what do you mean by that ?

Judge. [Embarrassed, confidentially.] It was only my fun, to frighten the young jackanapes. So many young men nowadays make such a point of money.

Gen. I think not, or, at least, I hope not. And as to my son—I am certain. Don't take it amiss if I am warm on this point, for this is the second time to-day that money, as a motive, has been imputed to us in connection with things we try to keep as far apart as possible from that hateful word. Where our name is concerned, our hand, our honor, we are not accustomed to speak, or to think, of money.

Judge. No offence, I hope.

Gen. None, I hope. And now—will you excuse me for a little while ? A lady is waiting for me. [Exit, L.

Judge. [To BENNY.] Perhaps I was mistaken about these folks. Maybe it wasn't a question of money. I wouldn't want to be unjust to anybody.

Ben. [Coolly.] You can't help it ; it's your way. Look how you treated me.

Judge. [Apologetically.] But, my dear boy, we may be mistaken in a person.

Ben. Not in me. You ought to have appreciated my merit at a glance. Your daughter did, and she's considerably younger than you are. But, of course, I wasn't distinguished enough for you. You wanted a future general in the family.

Now you've got what you've been working for. But enough's been said. This is the last lecture you'll get from me. [Crosses, L.] Whatever you choose to give your daughter, I won't say another syllable.

Judge. Well, there's no question of money *now!*

Ben. Certainly not. You've just said you'll double Viva's dowry—so there's an end to the matter.

Judge. You young—! Oh, pshaw! let's stop joking, and have a sensible word together. You *will* make my daughter happy?

Ben. [Stares at him.] I? What have I to do with it?

Judge. Now don't look innocent. Do you want me to ask you to marry her?

Ben. It wouldn't change my mind one bit if you did; I have been wounded too deeply. I don't know how you can repair the injury you have done.

Judge. [Indignant.] Why, man alive!

Ben. I didn't sleep the whole night.

Judge. No, confound it. You kept me up half the night to keep you company.

Ben. [Affected feeling.] Do you suppose I went home after that! That I slept when I did go home! With agony in my heart? We had been so happy in our love! [Sits and affects to weep.]

Judge. But don't you see that I'm willing?

Ben. No, no, it's all over. [Going R.] Return home, and bear my farewell to your lovely child. I shall step in here for a while, and try to forget her. [Exit, R.]

Judge. I'm sorry to lose that young man; he seems sincere. I don't know what to do. The evil one himself couldn't find his way out of my difficulties. [Gets his hat, and is about to go as SCUTTLEBY enters from C. R.]

Scuttleby. Ah, Judge, I've just had the privilege of paying my respects to your charming daughter.

Judge. My Viva! Where?

Scut. At the window. She nodded to me very pleasantly from that room as I turned the corner. [Points to door, R.]

Judge. My daughter! in there! And that young rascal! [Runs to door, R., just as it opens and BENNY and VIVA come out arm in arm.] This beats everything. You pair of hypocrites!

Viva. [Running to him.] Why, papa, how good of you to send Benny to me.

Benny. I have resolved to overlook all, sir. Make me happy.

Judge. [Separates them.] Not so smart. [Takes VIVA.] You come in here, miss, and let me talk to you a minute. [They go into room, R.]

Scut. [To BENNY.] I suppose I may congratulate, eh?

Ben. You may. I've just given my consent to the father.

Scut. Such a lovely girl! How did you capture the prize?

Ben. Easiest thing in the world. It only requires a graceful transition from any object—say this armless Hermes of Praxiteles—to the subject nearest your—

Judge. [Appears in door-way, R.] Will you step in here a moment, young man?

Ben. [To SCUTTLEBY] You hear! he can't live without me. Coming, papa. [To JUDGE, in door.] Oh, what a happy life we'll lead together. [Exit with JUDGE, R.]

Scut. [Examines bust on pedestal.] A graceful transition from this object to a successful declaration. I don't quite see the sense of it—but it's worth trying.

Grinnidge. [Enters, L. D., with hat in hand, talking back as he enters.] Well, I'm glad it's settled. Don't stir. Thank you; I'll find my way out.

Scut. Hullo! you here?

Grin. Yes. Just settling up a little business with Cousin Eutycia. [Confidentially.] I say, Scuttleby, you are not too late for that train yet. [SCUTTLEBY makes a gesture of disgust with GRINNIDGE.] Honor bright, old chap, your case isn't hopeless in that quarter. Do you know what that woman means to do for you?

Scut. No, what?

Grin. She intends to offer you the management of her country-property. Pays well; but you'll have to give up city-life a good part of the year and live on the place.

Scut. [Enthusiastically.] That woman's too good for earth! Live on the place—why shouldn't I live on it, if I'm going to live off it? Especially if she's to live in it. [Crosses, L.]

Grin. With your knowledge of the world, you ought to be of great use. I believe she's been robbed right and left. Now, for instance, she's about to buy a property that's admirably fitted for grape-culture. She could get it for half the money—but she pays what's asked, because it's valuable to her. I was afraid every minute she'd tell the seller what she wanted it for, and that he'd raise his price.

Scut. [Finger to nose.] Just wait till I get my fist in there. [Sighs.] Ah, Grinnidge, if I could only make up for my blunder this afternoon. What an ass I was! and she isn't

old at all. On the contrary, she has just got rid of that youthful giddiness that we sensible men abominate. As I was assisting her out of the carriage she gave me her hand—it's a small hand, too, and she just unconsciously gave mine a squeeze. Do you know, I almost couldn't let it go?

Grin. [Pats him on the shoulder, encouragingly.] It'll be all right again. Take charge of her property first, and then she may give you herself to take care of. I wouldn't be surprised if, in years to come—say on your silver-wedding—you'd recall this very moment and say: He was right after all—she's the woman for me; and it was all his doing—old Adam Grinnidge's doings.

Scut. [Seizes his hand.] Heaven bless him! [Slaps his shoulder as he embraces him.] You dear old boy!

Grin. Now brace up. Fix yourself a little. [Takes a rose out of his own button-hole and decorates SCUTTLEBY.] I'll order a bouquet and send it with your card.

Scut. [Trying to get away. Gently.] Oh, pshaw!

Grin. I only return your attentions, don't you remember? when you advised me to avoid the owl-train, and take the express. [Takes a long bottle of Cologne from his pocket, and sprinkles SCUTTLEBY. SCUTTLEBY retreats.]

Scut. Oh, I say—hold up—I acknowledge!

Grin. [Replacing bottle in his pocket.] Do you know, my wife prophesied this match all along? She always said that Eutycia was just the romantic old girl for you.

Scut. How does your wife know I want a romantic old girl?

Grin. Oh, she remembers you, years ago, at Saratoga—one moonlight night, at the springs.

Scut. [Dismayed.] Was that your wife? [Shakes GRINNIDGE'S hand.] Give her my regards.

Grin. With pleasure. [Going.] Now, don't be down-hearted. Put on your boldest. Pitch in—pitch in and win.

[Exit, c. r.

Scut. Ah, if I looked as I did then! [Goes to mirror, and runs his hands through his hair.] Of course, if one pries too closely, it is just a little—but inside! [Slaps his chest and comes down.] I'm all spring and moonlight yet. [The GENERAL enters, L., with MRS. LABURNAM.] By Jove! she's here.

General. [Speaking to MRS. LABURNAM, as they enter.] Why not wait here until Mr. Grinnidge returns?

Scut. [Advances.] My dear Mrs. Laburnam—general, good evening. [To MRS. LABURNAM.] I've heard of your

very kind intentions regarding my unfortunate circumstances, and I can only say that I accept with all my heart.

Mrs. Laburnam. Shall we really try how we can get along?

Scut. You'll be astonished in me. [Confidentially.] Wait till you see me out yonder on your ranch. I've got a pair of long boots and a cowboy's hat—and I'll grow a big beard, and get a long whip—and there I am for you.

Gen. I suppose the outfit is all the qualification necessary?

Scut. Oh, of course, a fellow needs a thorough knowledge of the land—but I'll pick that up as I go along. All that's really wanted is a *keen* eye, and a long head. For instance, I understand we are going to buy a piece of property *now*. I propose to look at it myself before we close. We sha'n't be humbugged if I can help it.

Gen. [Amused.] Very proper.

Mrs. L. [Apprehensively.] But, Mr. Scuttleby—

Scut. No, no, it's a part of my duties. You are too soft. [To GENERAL.] She's going to pay the fellow the price he asks—I'll squeeze him. [Winks at both.]

Gen. [Same.] I would. [MRS. LABURNAM goes up.]

Scut. I will. It's no business of his to know that the property is worth to us for grape-raising just double what he asks—is it? She needn't tell him—need she?

Gen. [Laughs.] No, no; and you needn't, either.

Mrs. L. [Throws up her hands and sinks in seat, c.] Oh, you poor, dear wool-head!

Scut. Oh, I'm business all over, when I *am* business. Who is the beggar, anyway? Tell me. I must see him at once.

Gen. You may. I am the mendicant.

Scut. [Horrified.] You! What? [Sits crushed, as he gazes at MRS. LABURNAM.] I see, I'm a failure at the start. [To GENERAL.] I offer my abject apology.

Gen. [Detains him.] Don't go. [To MRS. LABURNAM.] We won't cancel our contract on account of this little incident, will we?

Mrs. L. [Gives him her hand.] Certainly not. My word's my bond.

Gen. I thought so. [Whispering to SCUTTLEBY.] Stay here—I'll give you a chance to recover. [Bows to MRS. LABURNAM.] Excuse me, if I return to lock up the documents. [Exit, L.]

Mrs. L. [After a short pause, in which SCUTTLEBY evinces his uneasiness and sense of failure.] Well, how do you feel?

Scut. Oh, I am disgusted with myself; I just swelled up

with vanity at the idea of being of some use, and now I'm collapsed. It's all up. I'm floored. [She smiles, and shakes her head.] What, don't you think so?

Mrs. L. Your intention was good. That's all I look at.

Scut. [Overjoyed.] And you don't—really? [She gives him her hand; he kisses it, and looks at it as it rests in his own.] Number five and three-quarters! my favorite size! My dear Mrs. Laburnam, are you of such an angelic disposition that you can pass over that scene of this afternoon? I meant well, then, too. In your presence, I wanted to disparage every other woman.

Mrs. L. You don't deserve to have me do so, but I remember the days when we were younger.

Scut. When I was a major.

Mrs. L. When you were a minor, and you were a tolerable boy. Here's my hand. [Gives it.]

Scut. You're a lovely woman! [Tucks her arm under his.] And now tell me about the country. How's life there?

Mrs. L. Between you and me, dulness is no name for it.

Scut. You poor soul! A woman like you, so fond of fun!

Mrs. L. But now I've got a new manager for the estate, I shall have something to make me laugh.

Scut. [Pretending not to understand.] A new manager, eh—what kind of a fellow is he?

Mrs. L. Oh, one of the blundering kind that always amuses.

Scut. That's a recommendation.

Mrs. L. And besides, he was the best partner in an old-fashioned highland fling I ever danced with.

Scut. Eh? [Laughs.] You remember? Ah! [She nods. He hums a fling. She laughs. They dance a few steps to each other.] I hope your new manager hasn't forgotten that dance.

Mrs. L. Just think—I found an old ball-card of mine the other day, with his name written SIX times on it.

Scut. The rascal must have wanted you as a partner for life.

Mrs. L. I haven't the vanity to think that.

Scut. [Forgetting for a moment.] Oh, I bet he'll rouse the whole country before he's been with you a month. You'll be inviting all the neighbors, give balls, have receptions. Oh, he won't blunder there! That's his line.

Mrs. L. [Sighs. Sits, R., and picks up a book, turning over the leaves.] Ah, but it can't be. What would people say? A single woman—a widow!

Scut. [Aside.] Now's my time. [Aloud.] What would

they say? They'd say—why on earth don't those two fools get married?

Mrs. L. [Rises and retreats.] Oh, I won't have another word.

Scut. [Sinks into chair on which he had just knelt to make his proposal.] She's off the hook. If I only knew how to land her. [Looks at the bust of Hermes.] What did that young chap say about transitions? I'm hanged if I know. I'll try, though. [Aloud, rising.] Nicely furnished house, this.

Mrs. L. [Piqued.] Yes; so, so.

Scut. Lovely pictures! rather good figure, that. Hermes, I believe; by Praxiteles, isn't it? Did you notice it?

Mrs. L. [Indifferent.] No.

Scut. I don't seem to strike a chord! [Aloud.] You don't see any transition about it?

Mrs. L. What? [Indifferent.] No.

Scut. No. [Aside.] Neither do I. [Aloud, after going nearer the figure.] Don't it occur to you that he looks as if he was going to say something—make a declaration, for instance?

Mrs. L. No. [Aside.] What's the goose trying to say?

Scut. [Aloud.] What's that he's got on his shoulder? A hand! [Aside.] I wonder if there's any transition in the hand. [Aloud.] Going to offer his hand, eh?

Mrs. L. [Looks at it contemptuously.] It's a baby's hand. I don't admire fragments.

Scut. Fragments!

Mrs. L. How can he offer his hand when he hasn't an arm? [Turns away.]

Scut. That's a fact. What a pity he has no arms. Suppose he wanted to hug anybody, now. [Aside, struck by an idea.] Hug! I've got a transition now. [Aloud.] My dear Mrs. Laburnam! if this poor fellow, as you see him, were in my place, and were dead in love with you, and wanted to clasp you in his arms, and couldn't for obvious reasons—just imagine his feelings.

Mrs. L. I can't possibly see why you keep worrying yourself about Hermes. You've certainly got arms.

Scut. [Joyfully.] I have, and if I dared—

Mrs. L. But you wouldn't dare—

Scut. Wouldn't I? [He advances; she holds him off.]

Mrs. L. This is a declaration, I declare—

Scut. [Energetically.] It is. What do you say to it?

Mrs. L. I say—I say you've taken your time about it.

Scut. Then now we'll take each other—in time and for all time. [About to kiss her, when the voice of GRINNIDGE is heard; they fly apart.]

Grinnidge. [Speaks outside.] "Thank you, I'll go up alone." As GRINNIDGE enters from r. c., the GENERAL enters from L., to meet him, carrying some legal papers in his hand.] Now, cousin, are you ready?

Scut. [Takes MRS. LABURNAM'S hand.] We are ready, and I tell you, gentlemen, you had better hurry up.

Mrs. L. Hush!

Grin. Why?

Scut. Why? Because if you delay too long there'll be no Mrs. Laburnam to sign.

General and Grin. [Half-alarmed.] No!

Scut. [Introducing her.] But there'll be a Mrs. Phenix Scuttleby, who possibly may. [To GRINNIDGE, aside, as GENERAL goes to shake hands with MRS. LABURNAM.] How's that for the lightning-express?

Mrs. L. [To GENERAL.] I had to, the good-for-nothing! [Exit with GENERAL, who returns after seeing her to door, L.]

Scut. Wish me joy. [Holds out a hand to both.]

Grin. Is it done?

Scut. Is it done? Don't you see her fly and leave me in possession of the field, victorious? [They slap him on the back and laugh.] Oh, we'll celebrate this! Sha'n't we—sha'n't we make a night of it? Well, I guess not. [Suddenly.] No, no! I forgot—I've reformed. [They laugh, ironically.] But I don't go back on the old fun, oh, no. You make a night of it, and tell me all about it to-morrow. [Exit L. GRINNIDGE exits r. c. As the GENERAL is going off, he is met by Tom, who enters and pauses, c.]

Gen. Well, what is it? has my son come in?

Tom. No, sah. [Slight pause.]

Gen. Well, what is it?

Tom. There's a lady, sah, called to see you.

Gen. What's her name?

Tom. She only done tolle me to say a lady.

Gen. I'll step down and see her. [Makes a step toward door, when VALENTINE enters, c. r., veiled. TOM exits. She looks after him, then turns to GENERAL, and throws back her veil.]

Valentine. [Breathless.] General Everett!

Gen. [Amazed.] Mrs. Osprey! you here? [With forced calmness.] I must acknowledge that after your letter

I do not understand why I, or mine, should be honored by a visit from you.

Val. Oh, I know how angry you ought to be with me, but listen, only for one moment. A fatal misunderstanding—an impulse I cannot describe—forced the pen into my hand, and now I am here, overwhelmed with shame and contrition, to beg you to forgive me.

Gen. [Still reserved.] Nothing more is needed, madam; your apology is quite sufficient.

Val. I thank you.

Gen. [Holds out letter to her.] As far as you and I are concerned, let us consider the incident as if it had not happened.

Val. [Eagerly.] And you will never speak to your son of my letter? [Offering her hand.]

Gen. [In severe tone, and withholding letter.] My son!

Val. [Ingenuously.] Yes; he mustn't know anything about it.

Gen. Pardon me if I do not comprehend. I am the only person who has seen the letter; you ask for it, it is yours. How is my son concerned with it after that?

Val. [Hesitates.] You don't understand? [Timidly.] What do you want me to explain? It's—all right now. [Smiling and faltering.] Isn't it?

Gen. What is all right?

Val. Why, what was all wrong.

Gen. Your explanation explains nothing.

Val. But I can't say it to you. It was this way. After I wrote that letter—to him, and you had no business with it, but I know it was directed blindly, so I overlook that.

Gen. [Smiles grimly.] Humph!

Val. Yes. Then he came to see me: we had a conversation,—oh, how cruel of you to force me to tell you.—He loves me, I love him, and I dare not let him know what I thought of him in my heart only a moment before.

Gen. I understand perfectly now. You believe that you love him, and yet you would charge him with such baseness. I do not know what to think of the love which burns, and dies out, and flames again in a day. Had your love been even as great as mine you would have trusted him in the face of proof itself. Yet, I am only his father, and you are willing to become his wife. I do not believe in that love.

Val. You shall believe in it. I will atone for my error; only this once forgive me. He must not know what I have done.

He would despise me. You have offered to give me that letter, give me your promise too.

Gen. I owe my son the truth—and so do you, ten times more. Whatever be the pain, whatever the outcome—tell him now.

Val. If this is your last word—

Gen. [Interrupting her.] It is my only word.

Val. So be it.

Gen. [Tendering the letter.] You will tell him?

Val. [Putting it away from her by a wave of the hand.] No, I leave that for you. Show him the letter, and say to him that the woman who wrote it will never see him again. I leave you to settle the account with your conscience.

Gen. [Worried, and going aside.] No, no, I won't take the responsibility if it's going to break everything off—

Val. [Calmly.] It will.

Gen. It need not. If he loves you, it will be all right. If you tell him, it's a different thing from my telling. [She is about to go.] Don't go, we must reason this thing out. Let's sit down. Come, my dear, sit by me. [He sits, but she does not stir, and stands with her back to audience, wiping her eyes.] You know that I like you, that I always liked you.

Val. No. [Positively, but quietly and with quivering voice.]

Gen. Yes, I did, and it gives me the greatest pleasure to think that you are going to marry my son—my only son—whom I love—[With faltering tones.]—and whom I respect. [Moved by his words, she kneels impulsively at his feet. At the same moment HOWELL appears in door-way at back, holding his father's letter in his hand.] That's right. [Smoothing her hair.] We both want his happiness and his honor secure. You know I never wished him to marry a rich woman.

Val. There's no fear of that now.

Gen. [Misunderstanding.] Now don't be foolish. You must have him.

Val. But if I do, I lose my fortune—that is the will.

Gen. Oh, why didn't you say so? So you give up everything for my boy?

Val. He gives up everything for me.

Gen. And he knows?

Val. Yes. That is what I found out after I wrote the letter.

Gen. Oh! that's what was all right?

Val. Yes; you see, before that I thought—

Gen. What was all wrong. I begin to understand. Here is your letter. [She is about to take it.] And now,

give me mine ; mine was as bad as yours. We must destroy them both.

Val. I didn't bring it with me—I—

Gen. I hope you haven't lost it.

Howell. [Advancing with letter.] No, sir, it is here. [They start. HOWELL quietly presses his father's shoulder, and motions VALENTINE not to go.] Pardon me for disobeying—you know? One, two, three—and a cross! I kept at work for a long while, but on looking for a cross, one time, I saw this on the floor. [Gives letter to the GENERAL, who puts it in his pocket with the other instantly.] I thought I knew the dear old hand—[Pats his father on the shoulder.]—and suspected that you—[To VALENTINE.]—had come here. As I had something to tell him, too, I thought this was the time and place to do it.

Val. [Apprehensively.] You know why I came?

Howell. Oh, yes, I've been listening!

Val. And what are you going to say to me?

Howell. Nothing. [Smiles, and turns to his father.] But to you, sir, let me recall our agreement. I was to come and tell you when it was really serious with me. It's serious now. [His father grasps both his hands, and VALENTINE moves away, agitated. He goes to her and takes her hand.] I have the honor to present to you, the lady who has promised to become my wife. I know you will love her as well as you love me.

Val. I'm not at all sure about that.

Howell. I am. If I can read what's in his eye at this moment, he'd marry you himself, if I didn't. Wouldn't you, general?

Gen. Yes, lieutenant. [Clasps VALENTINE in his arms.]

SCUTTLEBY enters with MRS. LABURNAM, followed by GRINNIDGE.

Mrs. Laburnam. Why, Valentine!

Scuttleby. [To HOWELL.] What's up?

Gen. [Presenting VALENTINE.] Permit me. My son's future wife.

Scut. [Excited, to VALENTINE.] You are going to be married?

Val. Yes, cousin, and you will be a millionnaire.

Scut. That's so, if— [To MRS. LABURNAM.] I see, you married me for my money. Oh, I'm a catch!

Mrs. Laburnam. [Frankly.] Call it off.

Scut. Not for two millions. We'll all be married on the

same day, but you and I will be tied up first. Then the fortune remains with Cousin Val. That's the will : if I'm married when she marries, I get nothing. But I don't care. I'll have you—that's a million of itself any day.

Mrs. L. I could hug you for that. [*They go up as VIVA and BENNY enter, r., followed by JUDGE VAN RYKER.*]

Viva. Why, who's here? [*Runs to VALENTINE.*] You darling, congratulate me !

Val. Congratulate me.

Scut. Congratulate me.

Mrs. L. And me. [*All crowd together in two groups, one composed of the ladies, the other formed by the gentlemen. JUDGE VAN RYKER comes forward to the GENERAL.*]

Judge. [*Timidly.*] I didn't intend to make use of your house, general, for my own family business, but as a complication arose in it, I thought it the best plan to straighten it out on the spot.

Gen. I'm quite happy to afford you a spot.

Judge. [*Pointing to VIVA and BENNY.*] They're going to be married.

Gen. Accept my felicitations.

Viva. [*Bursts from group and runs impulsively to her father.*] Papa, they're going to be married.

Judge. Who ?

Viva. Cousin Val and Lieutenant Everett.

Judge. [*To GENERAL.*] And was that settled on this spot too ?

Scut. [*Coming down with MRS. LABURNAM.*] Yes, and this was settled here too.

Grinnidge. [*To JUDGE*] They're going to get married, and I'm going to get my money.

Judge. Why, it's in the air, or in the house. Gad, if I stay here, I may get married too.

Gen. [*Aside.*] We are probably safe anywhere.

Grin. You wouldn't be if there was a single woman left. I think we're in Hymen's excursion-train this time.

Scut. No, sir ; no Excursion-train about this. There are no return-tickets.

Ben. I have an idea ! Let's all get married together.

Howell. And immediately separate.

All. Oh, oh ! What ?

Howell. I mean, go off in different directions—each couple together.

All. But why ? why ?

Scut. It would be too much happiness for one train.

Val.

The elder poets to sing were fain
Of what *they* pictured Hymen's train.

Mrs. L.

A slow-coach travel that, I vow,
For love's express we go by, now.

Scut.

No more months of wooing, sighing,
Feigning, weeping, crying, dying.

Howell.

No longer dragging passion through
The months that once it took to woo.

Val.

Love travels now at lightning's pace,
Nor stops at "crossings" in the race.

Viva.

Is there no danger?

Ben.

Not in speed!
The track is ever smooth and straight,
'Tis only when the coupling breaks,
Or we switch off, we seal our fate.

Howell.

The course of true love ne'er runs smooth,
Says gentle Shakspere, our good master.

Val.

That's so; but now, it runs much faster.
A moment sees the start begun,
A day may find the course is run.^{*}
To Hymen's Junction all are sped,
With "fifteen minutes'" stop to wed.
You'll reach the place by many a train,
The "money," the "pride," and "hope of gain;"
But you'll not be happy nor safe, unless
The train you take is LOVE'S EXPRESS.

THE
RAILROAD
OF
LOVE

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

(From the German of Schænthan and Kadelburg)

BY
AUGUSTIN DALY

ACTED FOR THE FIRST TIME AT DALY'S THEATRE, NEW YORK,
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